

THE FUNERAL SERVICE IN THE METHODIST TRADITION
AS BASIS FOR A PROPOSED LITURGY

by

Robert Bryant Davis

A Professional Project Presented to the
FACULTY OF THE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY AT CLAREMONT
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

May 1979

This professional project, completed by

ROBERT BRYANT DAVIS

*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of*

DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

Faculty Committee

Ronald C. Osborn
Joseph C. Hough

April 3, 1979
Date

Joseph C. Hough
Dean

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2. SURVEY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE METHODIST FUNERAL | 13 |
| 1. Title | 13 |
| 2. Preliminary Rubrics | 14 |
| 3. Processional Anthems or Opening Sentences | 17 |
| 4. Prayers of Invocation | 19 |
| 5. The Lord's Prayer | 21 |
| 6. The Psalms | 21 |
| 7. Gloria Patri | 22 |
| 8. Apostles' Creed or Other Affirmation of Faith | 22 |
| 9. The Lesson | 23 |
| 10. Alternate Lessons | 23 |
| 11. Hymn or Anthem | 25 |
| 12. Sermon Followed by Extemporary or Liturgical Prayers | 25 |
| 13. Benediction or Blessing | 30 |
| 14. Anthems or Sentences at the Grave | 30 |
| 15. The Committal | 32 |
| 16. Revelation 14:13 | 33 |
| 17. The Kyrie | 33 |
| 18. The Lord's Prayer | 34 |
| 19. Prayer: "Almighty God, With Whom Do Live . . ." | 34 |
| 20. The Collect: "O Merciful God, The Father of Our Lord . . ." | 34 |
| 21. Benediction | 35 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table Showing the Order of Events in the Burial Service as Found in Successive Rituals on Dates of Major Revisions Beginning with the 1662 Prayer Book and the 1784 Sunday Service | 36 |
| 3. HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SURVEY | 42 |
| The Structure of Wesley's Service of 1784 as Compared with the 1662 Prayer Book Service | 42 |
| Major Changes which have Affected the Basic Structure | 43 |
| Significant Minor Changes which have Not Affected the Basic Structure | 53 |
| The Process by which the Ritual has been Revised | 59 |
| Insights Gleaned from General Conference Journals | 61 |
| External Influences on Continuity and Change | 72 |
| The Importance of the Ritual in Methodist Tradition | 79 |
| Conclusions About the Spirit of the Funeral Service in the Methodist Tradition | 84 |
| 4. A PROPOSED FUNERAL LITURGY | 90 |
| 5. REVISION--THE NEED FOR FURTHER STUDY | 124 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 130 |

ABSTRACT

Methodist burial services are surveyed in terms of continuity and change back to 1784, with comparisons to the 1662 Prayer Book of the Church of England. A six-page table illustrates the order of twenty-one components of the burial services as found in successive rituals on dates of major revision.

The survey is interpreted historically with special consideration of major and significant minor changes and any affect they have had on the basic structure. Material referenced shows the complex way by which changes in the ritual have been made and continuity preserved. External influences upon the liturgy such as war, growth of the funeral industry, and theological movements are examined. The importance of the funeral ritual in Methodist tradition is documented.

Research shows that the funeral ritual in Methodism has intentionally been a carefully structured service of worship, within which there has been a sense of freedom. Historically, the service has been designed primarily for funerals (rather than memorial events) held in the church. The English Book of Common Prayer has served as a major influence.

The proposed liturgy seeks a contemporary form while maintaining historical continuity with previous funeral

services in the Methodist tradition. Using updated language, this new revision provides for greater lay participation, an intentional recollection of the life of the deceased, and the Eucharist. The Committal has been changed. Several Bible translations have been used. Extensive explanatory notes and rubrics are in red on pages opposite the service.

An appendix offers samples of certain portions for use by the pastor. The final chapter suggests areas for further inquiry.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This project deals with the problem of revising the United Methodist funeral liturgy in a contemporary form while maintaining an historical connection with the Methodist tradition.

Since the founding of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the people called Methodist have wrestled with what should be the proper way for their church to bury the dead. They have struggled to develop a proper liturgical form--some organized formal expression of faith to deal with the event of death and the condition of bereavement.

When the event of death disturbs the life of the community, there must be an appropriate response. It is this response which is resolved into ritual so that the experience of bereavement can become a meaningful expression of the unity and wholeness of life. Attempts to achieve a proper liturgical form for burying the dead can be traced in the Methodist tradition back to 1784.

On November 3, 1784, when Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey arrived in New York, just prior to the landmark Christmas Conference in Baltimore, they brought with them, not only their ordination credentials and instructions to ordain Francis Asbury, but also The Sunday

Service of the Methodists in the United States of America
With Other Occasional Services.

In his preface to that document, John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, wrote:

I believe there is no Liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England: And though the main of it was compiled considerably more than two hundred years ago, yet is the language of it not only pure, but strong and elegant in the highest degree.

Little alteration is made in the following edition of it, except in the following instances:--

1. Most of the holy-days (so called) are omitted, as at present answering no valuable end.

2. The Service of the Lord's Day, the length of which has been often complained of, is considerably shortened.

3. Some sentences in the offices of Baptism, and for the Burial of the Dead, are omitted; and,

4. Many Psalms left out . . .

Bristol, September 9, 1784, John Wesley¹

The Sunday Service, per se, was not well received.

Kenneth Bedell believes that since the preachers had been denied the right to administer the sacraments, they had adapted themselves to other forms of worship. However, the other "Occasional Services" were followed rather closely. In 1792 when the Sunday Service was dropped, the ritual became part of The Book of Discipline and was changed

¹John Wesley, The Works of John Wesley (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), XIV, 304.

very little for almost one hundred years.²

Through the years many official changes have occurred, indicating that the funeral liturgy of the United Methodist Church has been a very important matter. Probably more has been involved than merely the desire to update the service. As one analyzes the changes, it becomes clear that the United Methodist Church has been trying to come to grips with basic theological and liturgical understandings.

In our time, other influences have come to bear upon the funeral liturgy. Psychological insights in the area of grief must be taken into consideration. Certain sociological understandings must also be considered. Most people today no longer live in small towns and villages but in cities and urban centers, deprived of the close bonds of community which once united the populace to a common sense of bereavement whenever the bell tolled.

This project attempts to take seriously the funeral liturgy in the Methodist tradition while at the same time seeking a new form for today. It is hoped that such a revision might receive broader usage than is currently the case. To receive broader usage a revised liturgy will need to convey the rich meanings of scripture and the Methodist tradition in ways that are helpful theologically and psychologi-

²Kenneth B. Bedell, Worship in the Methodist Tradition (Nashville: Tidings, 1976), pp. 52-56.

cally to persons in their grief. It must also be in a format that is easier to follow and less formidable than it is at present.

Those who have come to pay tribute and respect to the deceased will most likely represent a diverse group consisting of practicing Christians, nominal Christians and others who might have had only the barest exposure to the Christian faith. This diversity may often be found within the family of the deceased. Therefore, the funeral service in the Methodist tradition, properly conducted, should be a helpful experience for all who are present.

While the service assumes that the deceased was an active Methodist, the form can be readily adapted for use in instances where the deceased was not a churchgoer nor perhaps even baptized. The responsibility for such adaptation rests with the pastor, who will seek to relate the Christian faith within a context that avoids false presuppositions and averts a travesty of the service.

The services of the United Methodist minister will be called upon often by those outside the pastor's flock. Bishop Nolan Harmon observed in 1926 that

Methodist ministers have ever felt it their duty as Christians to pay such honor as possible to the human body in burial, and do not refuse to officiate at any kind of funeral, though Bishop Cooke implies that the

prayer, "I heard a voice . . ." should not be used at the burial of any but Christians.³

For some time there has been considerable attention given to experimental funeral liturgies. David James Randolph has given examples of three contemporary "Methodist" funeral services, without commentary and presented only as examples of what others have done with the service.⁴ Dennis Benson has produced a cassette tape to help persons develop creative funerals.⁵ More substantive works on the funeral include Grisbrooke's⁶ and Rowell's⁷ contributions.

The Abingdon Funeral Manual by Biddle has six helpful chapters devoted to the planning and conducting of the funeral with certain parts of the service given emphasis.⁸ Biddle prints the United Methodist funeral ritual as the only example of a classical service. He then gives six liturgies

³Nolan B. Harmon, Jr., The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism (Nashville: Lamar & Barton, 1926), p. 279.

⁴David James Randolph (ed.) Ventures in Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970, 1973), II-III.

⁵Dennis C. Benson, Celebrate! The Funeral (Nashville: Abingdon Audio-Graphics, 1973). Cassette and guide.

⁶W. Jardine Grisbrooke, "Towards a Liturgy of Committal" in Gilbert Cope (ed.) Dying, Death and Disposal (London: S.P.C.K., 1970)

⁷Geoffrey Rowell, The Liturgy of Christian Burial (London: S.P.C.K., 1977)

⁸Perry H. Biddle, Jr., Abingdon Funeral Manual (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976)

of various churches as examples of contemporary services, and concludes with a free service of his own.

Under the leadership of James White, the United Methodist Church is in the process of revising its funeral liturgy, but as yet that work has not been published.

The most helpful work for understanding the United Methodist funeral service, including its historical background and rubrics, is H. Grady Hardin's, "The Funeral," in the Companion to the Book of Worship.⁹ A less helpful and outdated treatment by the same author and others may be found in The Celebration of the Gospel.¹⁰

Until recently, the most extensive study of the Methodist funeral was Nolan B. Harmon's The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism, published in 1926.

While there has been some fine work, such as Biddle's, on certain aspects of the funeral service, there is no work published on a revised service for United Methodists. It is the intention of this project to lay the groundwork for, and to present a new funeral liturgy in the Methodist tradition.

The grieving process, as such, will not be a focal

⁹H. Grady Hardin, "The Funeral," William F. Dunkle, Jr. and Joseph D. Quillian, Jr. (eds.) Companion to the Book of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970)

¹⁰H. Grady Hardin, Joseph D. Quillian, Jr., and James F. White, The Celebration of the Gospel (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964)

point except as it impinges upon the funeral service itself. There is a vast bibliography of literature on the subject of grief; such as the one by C. Earl Gibbs.¹¹ It is assumed that the pastor has considerable familiarity with this body of material as an essential tool for counseling the bereaved.

As the title implies, this project is limited to the funeral service of The United Methodist Church and does not seek to compare it with other funeral liturgies, although there are many good ones which express their own uniqueness and the traditions out of which they come. Where material has been drawn from other liturgies, that is so indicated.

The word, "funeral," as used in this project, unless otherwise noted, refers to the total liturgical service for the burial of the dead whether the body is present or not, including the service of committal. Because the historical funeral service always assumed the presence of the body and because there is so much evidence to support the helpfulness of the body in facing reality and avoiding denial, the project will assume the presence of the body.¹² For these reasons there is no mention of the term, "memorial service."

That this project will not give exhaustive commentary on the numerous rubrics of the service in no wise

¹¹C. Earl Gibbs, Caring for the Grieving (Corte Madera, CA: Omega Books, 1976), pp. 177-186.

¹²Edgar N. Jackson, The Christian Funeral (New York: Channel Press, 1966), pp. 25-26.

indicates any lessening of their crucial importance. The best general treatment of these details of the Christian funeral service is in the first six chapters of Perry Biddle's Abingdon Funeral Manual.

This project will be focused upon the historical development of the United Methodist funeral service as a basis for developing a revision of that service. Certain principles will be taken into account in making this revision of the Order for the Burial of the Dead:

First, that the order maintain an historical connection with the Methodist tradition.

Second, that the order be structurally unified, yet, incorporating a balance between the objective and subjective elements of worship.

Third, that the service be guided both by Scripture and the history of the Church as these give expression to the reality of death and the hope of new life by the power of God.

Fourth, that the service, particularly the committal, will affirm belief in the resurrection of the body (a new act of creation by God) in contrast with the immortality of the soul (a Platonic notion).

Fifth, that the order be functional by being in the contemporary idiom, by encouraging lay participation, and

by having flexibility within a unified structure.¹³

Sixth, that the revision be in a format that is easy to follow while offering explanatory notes that will be helpful to any who may be unfamiliar with a liturgical service.

Seventh, that the order through periodic revision seek to express and integrate Scriptural and historical insights with the insights of sound pastoral theology, current research, and the verification of human experience.

The importance of this last principle can be sharply focused by examining a statement in George Hedley's epoch-making book, Christian Worship, published in 1953. Emphatically, he states:

The wise pastor . . . will gain (the family's) assent to a fitting service of worship instead of an emotional orgy. A sermon has no place in the burial service. Neither has a biographical review. The family will not benefit by the preaching, and they do not need the information.¹⁴

Hedley's work opts solely for scripture and prayer and classifies everything else as "arrogance." His treatment of the funeral may have scriptural soundness and offer some reflection of the Methodist tradition prior to 1932, but it is seriously lacking in the insights of pastoral

¹³ John Hammond Crum (ed.) The Sacrament of Sacred Sharing in the Lord's Supper (Benson, NC: Benson Newspaper, 1975), p. 16.

¹⁴ George Hedley, Christian Worship (New York: Macmillan, 1953), p. 218.

theology and current research in the process of grief recovery. The value of his highly objectified service certainly cannot be verified by the experience of the mourners. They would surely leave such a service disappointed, feeling it cold and impersonal.

Following this introduction, the project will be divided into three parts. The first part will attempt to look at the sources of the Methodist tradition: where, in fact, did John Wesley get the Methodist burial service and what have been the various additions and deletions to it?

The second part of the project deals with analysis of the data collected in the first part. What are the major changes to the structure and content? What do these changes signify? What is their meaning? What is their theological significance? What might be the major influences that have shaped these liturgical changes? Of the many changes made in the Methodist service, not all have been major, obviously. Some major changes have indeed been made, as well as some minor revisions and some alterations in the rubrics. All these have been official and have been made for some reason. The changes reflect some self-understanding, some theological insight of the Methodist people. Though some of them do not indicate much theological reflection, they still can provide insight into what was happening theologically at the time. Other changes may be purely arbitrary rather than a

change in public taste or in theological or psychological perspective. And some were doubtless prompted by practical considerations. In any case, it is useful to look at them and to summarize the "spirit" of the Methodist tradition.

The third part will be a contemporary expression of a funeral service within the Methodist tradition--a revised service that makes use of biblical, theological, historical and psychological insights. This fourth chapter will also offer explanatory notes on the service. The final chapter presents the need for further revision.

The historical study for this project utilizes the various editions of The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church dating back to 1784. Formerly known as The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the book has generally been revised every four years. Until 1968 it was the Discipline that contained the revised services. Since the publication of the revised Book of Worship in 1965, all services have dropped from the Discipline, being retained only in the Book of Worship.¹⁵

As to the far-reaching effects of this dramatic shift, one can only speculate. Revision of The Book of Discipline every four years has been a certainty; changes are expected. That is not the case with the Book of Worship.

¹⁵The Book of Worship for Church and Home (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1964, 1965), pp. 32-43.

If the history of the Book of Worship were to repeat itself, a revision could be expected about every twenty years. The next, on such a schedule, would occur in 1984.

Meanwhile, there is a need to begin rethinking the funeral service. Rather than a "mod and fadish" service that is here today and gone tomorrow, what is needed is a service that bears enough continuity with the past so as to be enduring.

Liturgy changes slowly; yet, change it must. It is to the ongoing task of that slow liturgical change that this project is devoted.

Chapter 2

SURVEY OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE METHODIST FUNERAL

For purposes of comparison and analysis, the traditional Methodist service can be broken down into the following parts:

1. Title
2. Preliminary Rubrics
3. Processional Anthems or Opening Sentences
4. Prayers of Invocation
5. The Lord's Prayer
6. The Psalms
7. Gloria Patri
8. Apostles' Creed or other Affirmation of Faith
9. The Lesson
10. Alternate Lessons
11. Hymn or Anthem
12. Sermon followed by Extemporaneous or Liturgical Prayers
13. Benediction or Blessing
14. Anthems or Sentences at the Grave
15. The Committal
16. Revelation 14:13
17. The Kyrie
18. The Lord's Prayer
19. Prayer: "Almighty God, with whom do live . . ."
20. The Collect: "O merciful God, the Father of our Lord . . ."
21. Benediction

1. TITLE

When John Wesley sent over The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America with Other Occasional Services, dated September 9, 1784, the title of the funeral service was, "The Order For The Burial of The Dead." This title he

adopted exactly from the 1662 Prayer Book.¹ In 1804 the title was changed to "The Order of the Burial of the Dead." From 1872 to 1932 in the Methodist Episcopal Church the office was called simply, "Burial of the Dead," with the subtitle, "Form for the Burial of the Dead." In 1932 there was a title and two subtitles:

Burial of the Dead
The Burial of the Dead
The Order for the Burial of the Dead

From 1939 to 1964 the title and subtitle were:

The Burial of the Dead
The Order for the Burial of the Dead

Since 1964, the single title has remained, "The Order for the Burial of the Dead."

2. PRELIMINARY RUBRICS

John Wesley omitted the first rubric of the 1662 Prayer Book:

Here is to be noted, that the Office ensuing is not to be used for any that die unbaptized or excommunicate, or have laid violent hands upon themselves.²

The next Anglican rubric (below) was abridged to become the first Methodist one.

The Priest and Clerks meeting the Corps at ye entrance of the Church-yard, and going before it, either into the Church, or towards the grave, shall say or sing;³

¹Nolan B. Harmon, Jr., The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism (Nashville: Lamar & Barton, 1926), p. 280.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Mr. Wesley's abridgment in the Sunday Service simply read, "The Minister meeting the Corpse and going before it, shall say." In 1916 the wording became, "The Minister, going before the Body shall say."

By 1932 this rubric about meeting and going before the body was dropped. In its place was this new rubric: "The Minister shall begin the service by reading one or more of the following sentences:" In 1964 the 1916 and 1932 rubrics were combined so as to read: "The minister shall begin the service by reading one or more of the following sentences: or the minister, meeting the body, and going before it, shall say one or more of the following sentences:"

The first rubric in Mr. Wesley's Sunday Service took second place when it was preceded in 1792 by a rubric making it permissible to substitute "some other solemn service" for Mr. Wesley's burial office. Thus, for the next 56 years, the service began with this rubric: "N. B. The following or some other solemn service shall be used." The rubric was dropped in 1848.

This rubric giving permission for some other service to be used is of peculiar interest because it contradicts the Discipline in use during this period. For example, the section on public worship in The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1832) offers this answer to the question, "What directions shall be given for the establishment of uniformity in public worship among us, on the

Lord's day?"

5. In administering the ordinances, and in the burial of the dead, let the form of discipline invariably be used . . .⁴

In 1892 a new rubric was inserted: "(We will on no account whatever make a charge for burying the dead.)" In 1932 this was shortened to read, "We will make no charge for burying the dead." This rubric about paying for ministerial services was dropped by 1939. It reappeared in 1964 in the following form: "The pastor shall not accept an honorarium for this service when the deceased was a member of his parish."

Additional rubrics were added in 1964, bringing to six the total number. The entire list reads:

The death of a member of the church should be reported to the pastor as soon as possible, and arrangements for the funeral should be made in consultation with him.

The pastor shall not accept an honorarium . . .

Funeral services of church members should be held in the sanctuary. The casket should be placed before the altar or the Lord's Table and remain closed.

In the event of cremation the service may be adapted at the discretion of the minister.

The service may begin and end with appropriate music selected in consultation with the minister.

The minister shall begin the service by reading one or more of the following sentences; or the minister, meeting the body, and going before it, shall say one or more of the following sentences:

⁴The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Waugh and Mason, 1832), p. 73.

3. PROCESSIONAL ANTHEMS OR OPENING SENTENCES

What today are called "opening sentences" were originally called "processional anthems" because the original order called for them to be sung or said by "The Priest and Clerks."

John Wesley adopted word for word the opening sentences from the 1662 Prayer Book. They remained in the liturgy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, aside from minor word changes, until 1916. They are given here for uniformity in the Revised Standard Version, which was used in the latest revision (1964).

The first is John 11:25-26:

Jesus said . . . "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die."

The second is Job 19:25-27:

. . . I know that my Redeemer lives, and at last he will stand upon the earth; and after my skin has been thus destroyed, then without my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see on my side, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.

The third and fourth sentences are combined from I Timothy 6:7 and Job 1:21:

. . . We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain that we cannot take anything out of the world. "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

For one hundred and thirty-two years these three "anthems" opened Methodist funeral services. For at least

the one hundred twenty-three previous years they had been opening Anglican funeral services.

In 1916 the second anthem from Job 19 was omitted. The Methodist Episcopal Church followed the example of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which in 1910 had substituted II Corinthians 5:1 in its place:

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The Methodist Episcopal Church omitted the last of these three historic anthems in 1916, substituting for it the description of the heavenly city in Revelation 21:22-23:

And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.

In 1932 the John 11 and II Corinthians 5 passages were retained and three others added, making a total of five passages. John 11 was shifted from position number one to position number three. II Corinthians 5 was shifted from position number two to position number five.

In position number one was placed Deuteronomy 33:27a, "The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

In position four was inserted a passage from the Apocrypha, The Wisdom of Solomon 5:15, 16b:

. . . The righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the most High takes care of them . . . With his right hand he will cover them, and with his arm he will shield them.

The 1939 revision reestablished the John 11 passage to position one from position three. Psalm 124:8, which had been in position two, was shifted to the committal service. Deuteronomy 33 was moved to replace it in position number two. In position number three was added Psalm 27:1, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" The Wisdom of Solomon 5 passage remained in position four, and, the II Corinthians 5 passage in position number five.

In 1964 the passage from the Apocrypha was removed from position number four and replaced with Psalm 28:6-7a: "Blessed be the Lord! for he has heard the voice of my supplications. The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts." The other four passages retained their same positions.

4. PRAYERS OF INVOCATION

It is significant to note that the prayers at the beginning of the service, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, are rather late additions. They do not appear before 1932. Until this time the service moved directly from the opening sentences of scripture to the Psalms. In 1932 the Minister was instructed to "offer one or both of the following Prayers, ending with the Lord's Prayer":

Almighty God, Fount of all life, Thou art our refuge and strength, Thou art our help in trouble. Enable us, we pray Thee, to put our trust in Thee, that we may obtain comfort, and find grace to help in this and every time of need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Heavenly Father, we beseech Thee to solace us Thy children in our sorrow. As Thou didst send the Holy Spirit to be the comforter of Thy people, strengthen us by His gracious indwelling, that we may be enabled to contemplate the joy of that better home where Thou art seen and worshipped as the Light of all whom Thou keepest in Thine everlasting love: through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The evolution of these prayers is interesting. The first prayer above was retained. In place of the second prayer, the following was substituted in 1939:

Almighty God, our Father, from whom we come and unto whom our spirits return, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Thou art our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Grant us Thy blessing in this hour, and enable us so to put our trust in Thee, that our spirits may grow calm and our hearts be comforted. Lift our eyes beyond the shadows of earth, and help us to see the light of eternity. So may we find grace and strength for this and every time of need; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In 1964 the first prayer was dropped. The new first prayer was as follows, moved from the prayers following the sermon that appeared between 1939 and 1964.

O God, the Lord of life, the conqueror of death, our help in every time of trouble, who dost not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men: Comfort us who mourn, and give us grace, in the presence of death, to worship thee, that we may have sure hope of eternal life and be enabled to put our whole trust in thy goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In 1964 was added this third prayer by Edwin B.

Womack:

O God our Father, creator of all mankind, giver and preserver of all life: We confess to thee our slowness to accept death as part of thy plan for life. We confess our reluctance to commit to thee those whom we love. Restore our faith that we may come to trust in thy care and providence; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Also was added this fourth prayer by Donald R.

Jessup:

O Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who in death hast gone before us: Grant us the assurance of thy presence, that we who are anxious and fearful in the face of death may confidently face the future, in the knowledge that thou has prepared a place for all who love thee. Amen.

5. THE LORD'S PRAYER

From the very beginning, the Lord's Prayer has been part of the Committal service. It did not enter the early portion of the liturgy until 1932, when it followed the Prayers of Invocation. It retained this position in the service until 1964, when it was dropped in the final draft of the revision, though not in the first draft.

6. THE PSALMS

John Wesley omitted Psalm 39 (which had been in the 1662 Prayer Book) from his Sunday Service but retained Psalm 90, concluding with the Gloria Patri. In 1792 Psalm 90 and the Gloria were removed. In 1868 Psalm 39, which Wesley had omitted, was inserted for the first time in the Methodist service. Psalm 90, the only Psalm Wesley had

included, was reinserted.

Psalm 39 again was omitted in 1916 and replaced with Psalm 23. It should be noted, however, that the fourth verse of Psalm 39 was added to the Committal Service. Psalm 90 was retained but shortened to include only verses 1, 2, 4-6, 12, 14, 16 and 17. The revision of 1939 added Psalm 121 to Psalms 23 and 90. The revision of 1944 added Psalm 27, and it listed the four Psalms as Old Testament lessons: "Here may be read one or more of these lessons from the Old Testament."

7. GLORIA PATRI

The Gloria Patri at the end of the Psalter reading, which was in Wesley's service, was dropped in 1792, along with the Psalms. One hundred fifty-two years later, in 1944, it was reinstated.

8. APOSTLES' CREED OR OTHER AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

The Apostles' Creed did not appear in the 1662 Prayer Book and did not appear in the Methodist funeral liturgy until 1964. At the time of its inclusion, the rubric read: "Here the congregation may confess their faith according to the Apostles' Creed or another affirmation of faith."

9. THE LESSON

John Wesley took over from the 1662 Prayer Book the same rubric for the lesson: "Then shall follow the Lesson taken out of the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle of Saint Paul to the Corinthians." The reading began at verse 20 and continued to the end of the chapter at verse 58. In 1792 the Methodist forbears swept it away with the Psalms. In 1868 it was reinserted, beginning at verse 41. Also in 1868 the rubric became permissive and read: "Then may follow the reading of the Epistle as follows: I Cor. xv: 41-58."

In 1916 the passage was abridged, omitting verses 50-52. Also that year I Corinthians 15 ceased to be the lesson. From its place of prominence it became, and remains, one of several New Testament lessons from which the minister is to select and read two or more (one or more after 1964). However, until 1932 I Corinthians headed the list of New Testament lessons.

10. ALTERNATE LESSONS

In 1916 two alternate lessons were added: John 14: 1-3, 15-20, 25-27 and Revelation 7:9-17. By 1932 there were four New Testament readings listed after this rubric: "Here shall be read Lessons from the New Testament." The first reading in 1932 was from John 14, which was changed to include verses 1-6a, 15-20, and 25-27.

For the second reading was added Romans 8:14-18, 28a, 31, 35, and 37-39.

For the third reading, I Corinthians 15 was altered and somewhat expanded to include verses 20, 35-36, 38a, 42-44, 49, and 53-58.

As the fourth reading, Revelation 21:2-4, which describes the New Jerusalem, was substituted for Revelation 7:9-17, which was dropped.

In 1939 two more readings were added, bringing to six the number of Alternate Lessons. John 14 stayed in position one but was shortened to include only verses 1-3, 6a, 15-19b, and 27. Romans 8, I Corinthians 15 and Revelation 21 remained the same in positions two, three and four. Added were fifth and sixth readings from Revelation 22:1-5 and Ephesians 3:14-21.

In 1944 the rubric was changed to read, "Here shall be read one or more of these lessons from the New Testament."

In 1964 the rubric was reworded as follows: "Here one or more of the following lessons from the Scriptures shall be read."

In 1964 the list of lessons was again headed by John 14, now changed to include verses 1-7, 15-17, and 27. Romans 8 remained the same in second position except that the second-half of the 28th verse was added. I Corinthians 15 remained the same in third position but was expanded to include verses 21, 22 and 50. The fourth reading again was

Revelation 21, with the addition of verses 5, 6 and 7. The fifth and sixth lessons, Revelation 22 and Ephesians 3, remained unchanged.

In 1964 the King James Version was dropped, except for Psalm 23, in favor of the Revised Standard Version.

11. HYMN OR ANTHEM

Provision for music did not enter the liturgy until 1932. The permissive rubric read: "Here may follow music and an Address." A similar rubric appeared in 1939. In 1964, however, this rubric following the lessons was changed to read: "Here may be sung a hymn or anthem."

12. SERMON FOLLOWED BY EXTEMPORARY OR LITURGICAL PRAYERS

The rubrics made no provision for a sermon until 1932. It was called an "Address," to be followed by extemporary or liturgical prayer. The term, "Address," was continued in 1939, but in 1964 the rubric was changed to read: "Then may follow a sermon, after which the minister may pray as he is moved, or may offer one or more of the following prayers."

With the introduction of the sermon in 1932, provision was made for prayer to follow. So as not in any way to "fetter the spontaneity or reject the reliance upon the

Holy Spirit which have characterized Methodist worship throughout its history," the rubric suggests "closing with extempore prayer."⁵ The following prayer by James Martineau (1805-1900) is offered as an alternative:

Eternal God, who committest to us the swift and solemn trust of life; since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of thy holy will, not waiting for tomorrow, but yielding to-day. . . . Consecrate with thy presence the way our feet may go; and the humblest work will shine, and the roughest places be made plain. Lift us above unrighteous anger and mistrust into faith and hope and [love] by a simple and steadfast reliance on thy sure will. In all things draw us to the mind of Christ, that thy lost image may be traced again, and [that] thou mayest own us at one with him and thee. Amen.⁶

The 1939 revision added seven more prayers, one of which was moved in 1964 to become one of the Prayers of Invocation. The eight prayers have remained essentially the same from 1939 to the present. An additional prayer was added in 1964.

1. The single prayer of 1932 has remained unchanged to the present.

2. The following prayer, added in 1939, has remained to the present:

⁵The Book of Worship for Church and Home (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1964, 1965), p. viii.

⁶James Martineau, Home Prayers with Two Services for Public Worship (London: Longmans, Green 1892), pp. 132-133.

O God, who art the strength of thy saints, and who redeemest the souls of thy servants: We bless thy name for all those who have died in the Lord, and who now rest from their labors, having received the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Especially we call to remembrance thy loving kindness and thy tender mercies to this thy servant. For all thy goodness that withheld not his portion in the joys of this earthly life, and for thy guiding hand along the way of his pilgrimage, we give thee thanks and praise. Especially we bless thee for thy grace that kindled in his heart the love of thy dear name, that enabled him to fight the good fight, to endure unto the end, and to obtain the victory, yea, to become more than conqueror, through him that loveth us. We magnify thy holy name that, his trials and temptations being ended, sickness and death being passed, with all the dangers and difficulties of this mortal life, his spirit is at home in thy presence, with whom dwelleth eternal peace. And grant, O Lord, we beseech thee, that we who rejoice in the triumph of thy saints may profit by their example, that becoming followers of their faith and patience, we also may enter with them into an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and fadeth not away; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

3. The third prayer in the 1964 revision was the first of the Prayers of Invocation printed in the 1932 and 1939 revisions. In making the shift, the compilers modernized the language.

4. The new fourth prayer comes from an unknown author and has been taken from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer for the 1964 revision.⁷

Remember thy servant, O Lord, according to the favor which thou bearest unto thy people, and grant that, increasing in knowledge and love of thee, he may go from strength to strength, in the life of perfect service in

⁷Robert N. Rodenmayer, The Pastor's Prayerbook (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 135, 283.

thy heavenly kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Spirit ever, one God, world without end. Amen.

5. The fifth prayer has remained the same from 1939 to the present.

Father of spirits, we have joy at this time in all who have faithfully lived, and in all who have peacefully died. We thank thee for all fair memories and all living hopes; for the sacred ties that bind us to the unseen world; for the dear and holy dead who compass us as a cloud of witnesses, and make the distant heaven a home to our hearts. May we be followers of those who now inherit the promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

6. The sixth prayer has remained the same from 1939 to the present.

O Lord and Master, who thyself didst weep beside the grave, and art touched with the feeling of our sorrows: Fulfill now thy promise that thou wilt not leave thy people comfortless, but wilt come to them. Reveal thyself unto thy sorrowing servants, and cause them to hear thee say, I am the resurrection and the life. Help them, O Lord, to turn to thee with true discernment, and to abide in thee through living faith, that, finding now the comfort of thy presence, they may have also a sure confidence in thee for all that is to come; until the day break, and the shadows flee away. Hear us for thy great mercy's sake, O Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

7. The seventh prayer has remained the same from 1939 to the present. It was taken from The Book of Common Worship of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.⁸

⁸ Proposed Revisions for the Book of Worship for Church and Home (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1960), pp. 57, 255.

O Thou who hast ordered this wondrous world, and who knowest all things in earth and heaven: So fill our hearts with trust in thee that, by night and by day, at all times and in all seasons, we may without fear commit those who are dear to us to thy never-failing love for this life and the life to come. Amen.

8. The eighth prayer has remained the same from 1939 to the present.

O Lord, we pray thee, give us thy strength, that we may live more bravely and faithfully for the sake of those who are no longer with us here upon earth; and grant us so to serve thee day by day that we may find eternal fellowship with them; through him who died and rose again for us all, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

9. The ninth prayer has remained the same from 1939 to the present.

Almighty God, who art leading us through the changes of time to the rest and blessedness of eternity: Be thou near to comfort and uphold. Make us to know and feel that thy children are precious in thy sight, that they live evermore with thee, and that thy mercy endureth forever. Thankful for the life which thou hast given us for these seasons, we pray thy help now to resign it obediently unto thee. Assist us to return to the scenes of our daily life, to obey thy will with patience, and to bear our trials with fortitude and hope. And when the peace of death falls upon us, may we find our perfect rest in thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The 1964 revision contains two additional prayers for use when a child has died. The first of these prayers comes from the committal service in "The Order for the Burial of a Child," which was included from 1916 to 1964. This prayer by John Dowden (d. 1910), Bishop of Edinburgh, was taken from the 1928 Book of Common Prayer.⁹ It first appeared in the

⁹Rodenmayer, pp. 137, 293.

1939 revision of the ritual for children.

The other prayer was the second of two Prayers of Invocation that appeared in the children's ritual between 1932 and 1964.

13. BENEDICTION OR BLESSING

No benediction appeared in the first portion of the funeral service until 1932. At that time a permissive rubric introduced II Corinthians 13:14. This benediction was dropped in 1944 and replaced with Numbers 6:24-26. In 1964 this benediction was dropped and replaced with the benediction most closely associated by Methodists with Holy Communion, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, . . ."

14. ANTHEMS OR SENTENCES AT THE GRAVE

The rubric introducing the service at the grave remained essentially the same from 1784 to 1916, when the word, "Corpse," was changed to "Body." It then read, "At the Grave, when the Body is laid in the Earth, the Minister shall say:". In 1932 the wording was changed as follows: "At the grave, when the People are assembled, the Minister shall say:". Added to this, in 1964, were the words: "one or more of the following sentences:". The sentences were sometimes called anthems because the 1662 Prayer Book called for them to be sung, if not said by the priest and clerks.

The first sentence until 1916 was Job 14:1-2, the familiar "Man that is born of woman." In 1916 this first sentence was dropped and a line from the thirty-ninth Psalm was inserted in its place: "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am."

The second, third, and fourth of the anthems are from an old antiphon sung at compline.¹⁰ Its authorship is attributed to Notker, a religious poet, of St. Gall, in Switzerland, in the latter part of the ninth century.¹¹ These anthems began with the words, "In the midst of life we are in death."

In 1932 all of the above was dropped. Two new sentences were adopted. The first was Isaiah 35:4, which remains to the present. The second was Isaiah 35:10, which was dropped in 1939.

The three additional sentences adopted in 1939 remain to the present. They are Psalm 124:8, Psalm 103:13, and Psalm 103:17.

¹⁰Harmon, pp. 302-303.

¹¹R. J. Cooke, History of the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1900), p. 274.

15. THE COMMITTAL

John Wesley omitted the committal in his Order for the Burial of the Dead. It had appeared in the 1662 Prayer Book but did not appear in the Methodist service until 1864. The committal was introduced with this rubric: "Then while the earth shall be cast upon the body by some standing by, the Minister shall say,--". The committal came from the Protestant Episcopal Liturgy and was as follows:¹²

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of the world the soul of the departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; looking for the general resurrection in the last day, and the life of the world to come, through our Lord Jesus Christ; at whose second coming in glorious majesty to judge the world, the earth and the sea shall give up their dead; and the corruptible bodies of those who sleep in him shall be changed and made like unto his own glorious body; according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

In 1916, in place of the above, was inserted:

"Forasmuch as the spirit of the departed hath returned to the God who gave it, we therefore . . ." In this way the passage from Ecclesiastes 8:12 and 12:7 was followed directly and the objections to the former passage were eliminated. The wording of the Committal also follows Philippians 3:20.

The rubric for casting earth upon the body remained until 1932. At that time the Committal ritual offered two alternatives. The first:

¹²Harmon, p. 304.

Forasmuch as the spirit of the departed has entered into the life immortal, we therefore commit his body to its resting place, but his spirit we commend to God, remembering how Jesus said upon the Cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

This remains to the present.

The second option was the 1916 committal, which remains to the present.

In 1939 a third option was offered. It read:

Forasmuch as Almighty God hath received unto Himself the soul of our departed brother, we therefore tenderly commit his body to the ground in the blessed hope that as he has borne the image of the earthly so also he shall bear the image of the heavenly.

This option also remains to the present.

16. REVELATION 14:13

All services from 1784 to the latest contain Revelation 14:13. Until 1932 the rubric was mandatory. Since that time it has remained permissive. The wording of the verse has had only minor changes.

17. THE KYRIE

The Kyrie eleison or Lord, have mercy has been retained from 1784 to the present with the exception of the years 1932 to 1944. The rubric was mandatory until becoming permissive in 1944.

18. THE LORD'S PRAYER

Having been introduced by the Kyrie, the Lord's Prayer followed immediately until 1864. From 1864 until 1944 it came at the close of the committal and then was restored to its former position immediately following the Kyrie. The rubric was mandatory until 1932, when it became permissive.

19. PRAYER: "ALMIGHTY GOD, WITH WHOM DO LIVE . . ."

This prayer was omitted by John Wesley. It came into the ritual in 1884 from the 1662 Prayer Book via the 1789 revision of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. The prayer remains to the present having had only minor changes.

20. THE COLLECT:
"O MERCIFUL GOD, THE FATHER OF OUR LORD . . ."

The collect, as taken over by Wesley from the 1662 Prayer Book, has remained unchanged in every revision since 1784.

In 1944 an additional collect was inserted, having been adapted from The Book of Common Order of the United Church of Canada.¹³ Until this time, the previous two prayers followed a mandatory rubric. With the addition of

¹³Nolan B. Harmon, Jr., (ed.) The Pastor's Ideal Funeral Manual (Nasville: Abingdon Press, 1942), p. 84.

this third prayer, all were placed under a permissive rubric, which currently reads: "Then the minister may offer one or more of the following prayers."

21. BENEDICTION

From Wesley's service to the present, the final benediction at the grave has been II Corinthians 13:14, with the exception that in 1964 Hebrews 13:20-21 was inserted as a first position option. The rubric, when there has been one, has always been permissive.

TABLE
Showing the Order of Events in the Burial Service
as Found in Successive Rituals on Dates of Major Revisions
Beginning with the 1662 Prayer Book and the 1784 Sunday Service

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. Title | 1662 | 1784 | 1792 | 1796 | 1844 | 1864 | 1868 | 1872 | 1884 | 1892 | 1916 | 1924 | 1932 | 1939 | 1944 | 1964 |
| a. Order for | x | x | x | x | | x | | | | | | | x | x | x | x |
| b. Order of | | | | | x | | x | | | | | | | | | |
| c. Form for | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x | | | | | |
| 2. Preliminary Rubrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Minister going before body shall say . . . | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | | x |
| b. No charge | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | | | | x |
| c. Additional rubrics | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| 3. Processional Anthems or Opening Sentences | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. John 11:25-26 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| b. Job 19:25-27 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| c. I Timothy 6:7 and Job 1:21 | x | 1662 | 1784 | 1792 | 1796 | 1844 | 1864 | 1868 | 1872 | 1884 | 1892 | 1916 | 1924 | 1932 | 1939 | 1944 | 1964 |
| d. II Corinthians 5:1 | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | | x | x | x |
| e. Revelation 21:22-23 | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | x | | |
| f. Deuteronomy 33:27a | | | | | | | | | | | | x | | | x | | x |
| g. Wisdom of Solomon 5:15, 16 b | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | |
| h. Psalm 124:8 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | (1) | | |
| i. Psalm 27:1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x |
| j. Psalm 28:6-7a | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| 4. Prayers of Invocation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. Almighty God, Fount . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | (2) | |
| b. Our Heavenly Father . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| c. Almighty God, Our Father . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | |
| d. O God, The Lord . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| e. O God, Our Father . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| f. O Jesus Christ . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |

(1) Shifted to the Committal Service

(2) Shifted to the Committal Service

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| d. Revelation 21:2-7 | 1662 | 1784 | 1792 | 1796 | 1844 | 1864 | 1868 | 1872 | 1884 | 1892 | 1916 | 1924 | 1932 | 1939 | 1944 | 1964 |
| e. Revelation 22:1-5 | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x |
| f. Ephesians 3:14-21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x |
| 11. Hymn or Anthem | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x |
| 12. Sermon followed by Extemporary or Liturgical Prayers | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x |
| a. External God who committest . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x |
| b. O God who art the strength . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x |
| c. O God the Lord of Life . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | (5) | x |
| d. Almighty God, Fountain . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| e. Remember thy servant . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| f. Father of Spirits . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| g. O Lord and Master . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| h. O Thou who hast ordered . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| i. O Lord we pray thee . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |
| j. Almighty God, who art leading . . . | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |

(5) Shifted to Prayer of Invocation

| | 1662 | 1784 | 1792 | 1796 | 1844 | 1864 | 1868 | 1872 | 1884 | 1892 | 1916 | 1924 | 1932 | 1939 | 1944 | 1964 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| b. Committal from Protestant Episcopal Church in America | (6) | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | | | |
| c. 1916 Committal | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| d. 1932 Committal | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x |
| e. 1939 Committal | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x |
| 16. Revelation 14:13 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| 17. The Kyrie | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | x |
| 18. The Lord's Prayer | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| 19. Prayer: Almighty God with whom do live . . . | x | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x |
| 20. The Collect | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| Additional Collect | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x |
| 21. Benediction | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| a. II Corinthians 13:14 | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | x |
| b. Hebrews 13:20-21 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x |

(6) At the formation of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America the Committal was changed, the English form of the Commendation of the Dead at a sea burial being adopted, and in 1864 adopted by the M. E. Church. It is similar to the Committal in the 1662 Prayer Book.

Chapter 3

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE SURVEY

The Survey of Continuity and Change is interpreted in this chapter under the headings of (1) the structure of Wesley's Service of 1784 as compared with the 1662 Prayer Book service, (2) major changes which have affected the basic structure, (3) significant minor changes which have not affected the basic structure, (4) the process by which the ritual has been revised, (5) insights gleaned from General Conference Journals, (6) additional influences on continuity and change, (7) the importance of the Ritual in Methodist tradition, and (8) conclusions about the spirit of the funeral service in the Methodist tradition.

THE STRUCTURE OF WESLEY'S SERVICE OF 1784 AS
COMPARED WITH THE 1662 PRAYER BOOK SERVICE

That the Prayer Book was the strongest influence upon the service developed by John Wesley has already been substantiated in Chapter 1. Wesley's burial service was included in the Sunday Service which was brought in sheets to America in 1784.¹ It was a shortened version of the burial rite in the Prayer Book. From the Prayer Book rite, Wesley re-

¹ John Emory, A Defence of "Our Fathers," and of the Original Organization of The Methodist Episcopal Church against The Rev. Alexander M'Caine and Others (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1827), pp. 68-69.

moved the first rubric prohibiting the use of the service for any who had died unbaptized or excommunicated or who had committed suicide.

He also removed Psalm 39 and the single, but lengthy, sentence of committal, along with its introductory rubric. The prayer, "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord . . . ," was also removed. In addition, Wesley made certain minor deletions in the collect.

The basic structure of Wesley's service was as follows:

1. Title
2. Preliminary Rubric
3. Processional Anthems (Opening Sentences)
4. Psalm
5. Gloria Patri
6. The Lesson
7. Anthems or Sentences at the Grave
8. Revelation 14:13
9. The Kyrie
10. The Lord's Prayer
11. The Collect: "O merciful God, the Father of our Lord"
12. Benediction

In the ensuing years nine additional parts were added to this basic structure.

MAJOR CHANGES WHICH HAVE AFFECTED THE BASIC STRUCTURE

Although Wesley eliminated Psalm 39 from the Prayer Book, probably for brevity, he retained Psalm 90. The first significant change thereafter was the elimination between

1792 and 1868 of this Psalm and the Lesson. The Gloria Patri, originally attached to Psalm 90, was also removed in 1792, however, it was not restored until 1944.

After using Mr. Wesley's service for only eight years, the revisers dropped, in addition to Psalm 90 and its Gloria Patri, the Lesson from I Corinthians 15. These deletions left a total of only twelve verses of scripture in the entire service, half of which came from the Book of Job. During this timespan the texts of service had only a tenuous connection to the New Testament. In 1916, I Corinthians 15 became an alternate lesson but was still listed first among the readings until 1932. In that year it took its sequential place among the epistle lessons, all of which were preceded by the familiar verses from John 14.

The next major alteration to the structure was made in 1864, when the controversial "Committal" was added for the first time to the Methodist Service. The rubric instructing some standing by to cast earth upon the body entered at the same time and was printed as the introduction to the Committal proper. The rubric remained until 1932.

Inclusion of the Committal in 1864, eighty years after the founding of American Methodism, warrants special consideration. Curiously, one might ask why Wesley omitted the entire committal service from his abridgement of the 1662 Prayer Book.

Bishop Nolan B. Harmon referred to the Commendation

Or Committal as being "the fiercest battle ground in this Office."² "The Committal or Commendation," he notes, "is the part of this whole service which has caused the most controversy."³

Both Wesley and the Puritans strongly objected to the wording of the Committal in the Book of Common Prayer. According to Harmon,

The words added in 1552, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself," etc., displeased the Puritans--because it seemed to make God the author of death, and implied that every person was thus taken unto God. . . . "The sure and certain hope of the resurrection" also appeared to the Puritans to imply that all were laid to rest with that hope.

Mr. Wesley left out this entire Committal, following again the direction of Puritan pressure. He also doubtless wished to shun the thought commonly esteemed to be implied in this form.⁴

In reading the service as it existed before 1864, one begins to sense what the revisers must have experienced "at the grave, when the corpse is laid in the earth." The words which follow lack congruity with what is actually happening at the service. Here, in the last moments of ceremonial leavetaking, there is no reference to the person from whom the mourners are taking leave. The person's body, until death only a few hours earlier, was "the earthly tent" in

²Nolan B. Harmon, Jr., The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism (Nashville: Lamar & Barton, 1926), p. 278.

³Ibid., p. 303.

⁴Ibid., pp. 303-304.

which he or she lived. Paul Irion refers to the body as "a dimension of a person who has died" and continues: "If we affirm the value of personhood, we cannot demean any aspect of the person."⁵ So the body must be disposed of with care and tenderness. The dead body symbolizes that "death has brought to a conclusion the quality of relationship that has been sustained with the person."⁶

Undoubtedly the revisers had long been aware of the need for the words spoken during the ceremony of leavetaking to have some significant measure of congruency with the intensely personal "context of relationship and the hope for God's gift of new life."⁷ Thus, the deceased needed to be commended to God's care, and the body of the deceased committed to its final disposition.

What none of the commentators mentions is the fact that the words of committal, which Wesley did not include in his Sunday Service, were read at his own burial. The Rev. Mr. Richardson, who later was buried in the same vault in which Wesley was buried, read the funeral service, probably that of the 1662 Prayer Book. One early biographer describes the service:

When he came to that part of it, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased almighty God to take to himself the soul of our

⁵Ibid., p. 210.

⁶Ibid., pp. 210-211.

⁷Paul E. Irion, The Funeral: Vestige or Value? (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 184.

dear brother," etc., he substituted, with the most tender emphasis, the epithet father, instead of brother, which had so powerful an effect on the congregation, that from silent tears they seemed universally to burst out into loud weeping.⁸

The revisers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, adopted the Committal from the Protestant Episcopal Church in America in 1858. Six years later the Methodist Episcopal Church followed suit.

The most dramatic changes to the funeral liturgy were made in 1932. It was this revision which more than ever demarcated the two parts of the service: the first taking place in the church or house, and the second taking place at the grave or burial site. From 1868 to 1932, immediately after the Processional Anthems, was a rubric (with variations) to the effect that the Psalm(s) following may be read "in the house or church." Since it had been stated for the previous sixty-four years that this part of the service transpired at a place other than at the grave, it apparently was no longer necessary to state that which had become obvious by practice.

It was following World War I (1914-1918) that the funeral industry started to develop with the establishment of "funeral homes." Prior to and just after World War I the

⁸Richard Watson, The Life of Rev. John Wesley, A.M. (Cincinnati: Swormstedt & Poe, 1855), p. 346.

undertaker was called to the deceased's home, where most people died.⁹ That mortuaries were springing up across the country and taking the place of the church as the location for many funerals may be another reason why the location of the first part of the service was omitted.

Thomas Glidden, a past president of the National Funeral Directors Association, in denying that the funeral home is to replace the church as the proper place for a funeral service, commented that "It must be remembered that there are many clergymen who prefer, and some who even insist, that the service be conducted at the funeral home rather than at the church."¹⁰

The first and major portion of the service in 1932 became more like a Sunday morning worship service by being expanded to include one or two prayers of invocation followed by the Lord's Prayer and the addition of "music and an Address."

The revisers in the Southern Church had instituted the sermon in 1858, although Nolan Harmon states that it was usual in the Methodist Episcopal Church for her ministry "at some point in the service to give an exhortation or sermon,

⁹Thomas Glidden, "The American Funeral," Pastoral Psychology, XIV:135 (June 1963), 10.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 14.

especially if in church, and to pray extempore."¹¹ In the General Conference Journal of 1836 is an account of the funeral service for Bishop Emory. "Bishop Andrew read, sang, and prayed. Bishop Roberts preached from Revelations (sic) xiv, 13. The services were concluded with prayer by S. G. Roszel."¹²

Why it should take nearly one hundred years for the sermon to become an official part of the service is not clear, although there are two clues. The first is that nowhere in the Anglican tradition had a sermon been included. The second reason is that by 1916 the so-called "remarks by the minister" were going out of style, being supplanted by a printed form.¹³

The choice of extemporary or liturgical prayer following the Address was yet another major alteration. A benediction added at the conclusion of the first part of the service made an even clearer separation of the two sections.

The Gloria Patri, originally printed as an integral addition to Psalm 90, was removed with the Psalm in 1792. It was not reinstated until 1944, when it was placed at the

¹¹Harmon, p. 302.

¹²Methodist Episcopal Church, Journals of the General Conferences (New York: Carlton & Phillips, 1855), I (1796-1836), p. 427.

¹³Harmon, p. 302.

end of the Psalms, a usage which dates from the fourth century.¹⁴ As the service was and is constructed, the Gloria Patri serves to divide the Old Testament and New Testament readings.

The final major structural changes occurred in 1964. Added was "the Apostles' Creed or another affirmation of faith." Deleted was the Lord's Prayer preceding the Psalm(s) in the first part of the service.

The "Introduction to the Order for the Burial of the Dead" in the book of Proposed Revisions (1960) offers the following explanation for the addition of the Creed or Affirmation of Faith.

We have included a permissive rubric for the singing of a hymn or an anthem and the use of an Affirmation of Faith. Here again, your commission has made these suggestions in response to the insistence of many that the service should be one of high affirmation and religious experience.¹⁵

The precise reason for the deletion of the Lord's Prayer from the first portion of the service cannot be determined by any factual data. Of interest is the fact the Lord's Prayer at this point was included in the Order for Trial Use (1960-1964) but was removed for the 1964 General Conference. Although actions of various General Conferences

¹⁴Elizabeth A. Livingstone (ed.) The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 215.

¹⁵Proposed Revisions for The Book of Worship for Church and Home (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1960), p. 49.

are considered later in this chapter, it should be stated here that this deletion was not mentioned by Dr. Warren Bugbee when presenting the Order for the Burial of the Dead in the Report of The Commission on Worship to the General Conference of The Methodist Church in 1964.¹⁶ Nor was any mention made of the deletion in the "Introduction" to that Report (1964).¹⁷

Perhaps the most reasonable explanation for the deletion would be the "problem" of redundancy, i.e., occurring twice in the same Order. It should be noted, however, that the Lord's prayer does appear both in the service at the church and at the grave in the proposed Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church (1977).¹⁸ and the new Lutheran Book of Worship (1978).¹⁹

As the overall structure of the burial service has evolved, the major changes reflect a tendency to make the entire service more substantive, drawing upon the resources belonging to the rich heritage in the Church. With the ex-

¹⁶Daily Christian Advocate, VII:11 (May 8, 1964), 583.

¹⁷Report of the Commission on Worship to the General Conference of The Methodist Church 1964 (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1964), pp. 50-51

¹⁸The Proposed Book of Common Prayer (New York: Seabury Press, 1977) pp. 468-507

¹⁹Lutheran Book of Worship (Philadelphia: Lutheran Church in America, 1978), pp. 331-339.

ception of certain additions (Prayer(s) of Invocation, Creed, music and Address) all of the other major changes have had the end result of bringing the Methodist service into structural conformity with the 1662 revision of the Book of Common Prayer, which John Wesley abridged to form the service he sent to America in 1784. That conformity with the 1662 Prayer Book was a major design of the revisers is strikingly evident in the addition of the Committal since it had never appeared in American Methodism. It was from the Prayer Book, and perhaps from its American counterpart. The Creed, instituted in 1964, had been part of the 1928 revision of the Book of Common Prayer. Likewise, the singing of a hymn or anthem, which entered the Methodist burial rite in 1932, was part of The Book of Common Prayer of the Protestant Episcopal Church in 1928.²⁰

The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, had included a "suitable hymn" and a sermon as far back as 1858.²¹ More on the general shaping influence of this church follows later.

²⁰The Book of Common Prayer (New York: Seabury Press, 1928), pp. 324-337.

²¹Harmon, p. 291.

SIGNIFICANT MINOR CHANGES WHICH HAVE NOT AFFECTED THE BASIC STRUCTURE

Of the numerous changes in the burial service noted in Chapter 2, most have been minor. That is, they have not appreciably affected the external structure, the outward form of the service. Some of these changes within the structure are worth noting, nonetheless. They are given below in the order of their occurrence in the service.

The first of these significant minor changes is the first preliminary rubric, which has to do with the minister going before the body, reading the processional anthems. The "Introduction to the Order" found in the 1964 Report states that this first rubric "is a reminder to minister and congregation of the office of the ministry on the occasion of death."²² Actually, the procession is hundreds of years old. Massey Shepherd notes that "the anthems said or sung during the procession into the church or towards the grave go back to the 1549 Book."²³

In 1932 this ancient rubric was dropped but was restored thirty-two years later in 1964. The obvious implication during these years of omission is that the service will not begin with a procession. A subtle corollary to this

²²Report of the Commission on Worship 1964, p. 50.

²³Massey Hamilton Shepherd, Jr., The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 324.

change is a diminished importance of the office of the ministry.

That the implication and its corollary were intended by those who removed the rubric is evidenced by the remarks made by Dean Cannon when he presented the revision which restored the rubric to the General Conference of 1960. After instructing the Conference to find the proper place in the Worship Commission's Report, later known as the "Green Book," Cannon said:

. . . you notice those rubrics stress the inextricable connection with the Church, especially in the rubric where we give permission for the minister, as he walks before the casket into the church or the grave, to say, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life,' a service which Mr. Wesley observed.²⁴

Why would the Commission on the Revision of the Ritual in 1932 delete that which was part of the service at least two hundred and thirty-five years before Wesley touched it? The introductory comments made to the members of the General Conference of 1932 when the revised ritual was presented may offer a clue. Those remarks state that the Commission was seeking to eliminate "words and forms which have become unmeaningful to the present generation." Had the procession become unmeaningful? Perhaps it had.

It may well be that the reason for eliminating the procession was connected with the rise of funeral establish-

²⁴Methodist Church, Journals of the General Conferences (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1960), p. 559.

ments across the country. Somehow, a procession in a mortuary seems less appropriate than in a church. Typically, the mortuary funeral begins with the sequestering of the family in the "family room," the casket having been placed and framed with flowers.

Since the ancient meaning of the word, "funeral," had reference to a procession, the revisers were wise to restore this ancient rubric.²⁵ The original rubric about the minister meeting the body at the entrance of the church had reference to the common practice in the 16th and 17th centuries in England of bringing the body from the home in procession to the parish church by the people. Then the funeral service began at the "church stile" and moved to the body of the church or to the grave.²⁶

A second minor change, which does not affect the basic structure of the service, involves the elimination in 1916 of Job 19:25-27 and the combined reading of I Timothy 6:7 and Job 1:21 as processional anthems. They date back to the 1549 Prayer Book before Wesley adopted them. Massey Shepherd believes that the Job 19 passage "is the most beautiful statement in all the Old Testament of unswerving trust and hope in God despite tortuous bodily affliction and

²⁵Russell J. Becker, "Funeral--Memorial or Burial?" Pastoral Psychology, XV:143 (April 1964), 53.

²⁶Shepherd, p. 324.

decay."²⁷ Though it was kept by the Episcopalians, it was jettisoned by the Methodists for reasons which are not clear.

Of the Job 1-I Timothy 6 reading, Shepherd states that it points "to the transitory nature of earthly life and its utter dependency upon the goodness of God, Who alone, in the mystery of His providence, gives us mortal breath and takes it away."²⁸ He wrote that in 1950. Nevertheless, the Episcopal revisers removed it in their 1959 proposed revision, saying that it was "essentially negative in its statement."²⁹ This may also be the reason why the Methodist revisers had eliminated it earlier in 1916.

W. Jardine Grisbrooke, in his exhaustive and provocative paper on the liturgy of committal, suggests that the words, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord," acknowledge God's dominion and the formal return to him of that which he gave. "The formal surrender of the body is the final sign of the self-surrender in trust and hope and love which is the essence both of 'commitment' and of 'committal.'"³⁰

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹The Order for the Burial of the Dead (New York: Church Pension Fund, 1959), p. 4.

³⁰W. Jardine Grisbrooke, "Towards a Liturgy of Committal" in Gilbert Cope (ed.) Dying, Death and Disposal (London: S.P.C.K., 1970), p. 64.

Another minor change has been the placement of the Lord's Prayer in the Committal Service. Both in the Sunday Service and in the 1662 Prayer Book the Kyrie and Lord's Prayer were placed together in the service "At the Grave." However, between 1864 and 1944 the Lord's Prayer was separated from the Kyrie and placed at the close of the service, just before the Benediction. Restoring it to its former position is another example of alignment with the 1662 Prayer Book. It has already been noted that the Kyrie was omitted between 1932 and 1944.

The doxology at the end of the Lord's Prayer, "for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever," did not appear in the burial service until 1864. Curiously, the doxology while omitted from the ritual for Baptism and Matrimony was included in the ritual for the Lord's Supper at least as early as 1832. The doxology at that time took the following form: "for thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever."³¹ The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, did not add the doxology until 1910.³²

The prayer just before the final Collect, "Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of those who depart hence

³¹The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church (New York: Waugh and Mason, 1832), p. 99.

³²Harmon, p. 293.

in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful after death are in joy and felicity . . . ," first appeared in 1884. As previously noted, this prayer, found in the 1662 Prayer Book, was omitted by John Wesley, and for good reason. The Protestant Episcopal Church in America rejected it also. Here is the 1662 wording:

Almighty God, with whom do live the Spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the Souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the Burden of the flesh are in joy and felicity: We give thee hearty thanks for that it hath pleased thee to deliver this our brother out of the miseries of this sinfull world; beseeching thee, that it may please thee, of thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of thine elect, and to hasten thy kingdom, that we with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consumation and bliss, both in body and Soule, in thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.³³

To thank God for delivering the deceased from the misery of this sinful world was harsh and distasteful to the Episcopal revisers, as it must have been to Wesley. When the Methodist Episcopal Church reinserted this prayer in 1884, the form which was adopted was that of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The influence here, as elsewhere, comes directly from the 1789 Episcopal revisers, who rephrased this prayer on the basis of II Timothy 4:7 and Revelation

³³Facsimile of the original manuscript of The Book of Common Prayer, signed by Convocation December 20th, 1661, and attached to the Act of Uniformity, 1662 (London: Eyre & Scottiswoode, 1891), p. 312.

14:13.³⁴ The Southern ritual never reinserted any form of this prayer.³⁵

THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE RITUAL HAS BEEN REVISED

There have been two ways by which revisions to the funeral liturgy have been made. The first is the way of "Memorials" presented to the General Conference. Memorials are written petitions submitted by an individual or group requesting a change, i.e., an addition, deletion or alteration. Such requests have been funneled through what has been known generally as the Standing Legislative Committee on Ritual and Orders of Worship of the General Conference, which is the only policy making body for historic Methodism.

On each memorial the Committee, after due consideration, votes one of two ways--adoption or non-concurrence. If the Committee votes to adopt, the memorial is recommended with or without suggestions for referral to the Commission on Worship.

It is helpful to read the small print at the beginning of the report of the Standing Committee on Ritual and Orders of Worship in 1960.

To this committee shall be referred all memorials, petitions, resolutions, etc., relating to ritual and

³⁴Shepherd, p. 335.

³⁵Harmon, p. 305.

orders of worship.

(NOTE--Under the Subject of each Committee Report will be found the following abbreviations: M P F A N. They represent

M--Total membership of this Committee.

P--Number present when this Report was acted upon.

F--Number voting for the adoption of this Report..

A--Number voting against the adoption of this Report.

N--Number not voting.

Under the SUBJECT will be found "MEMORIAL: Serial No. or Nos." The number or numbers refer to the Memorial or Memorials used as the basis for the Report. For Memorials see report of the Committee on Reference, . . .)³⁶

An example of how the process works can be seen in the following memorial, which was adopted, meaning that the vote was concurrence.

SUBJECT: CHANGE ALL SCRIPTURE PASSAGES IN THE LITURGY TO THE REVISED STANDARD VERSION OF THE BIBLE, MEMORIAL: SERIAL NO. 1188.

This committee recommends that the above memorial be referred to the Commission on Worship.

There were twenty-four persons on the Committee, but only sixteen were present when this memorial was acted upon. Fifteen members voted for adoption, and one did not vote.³⁷

In 1964 an additional rubric was voted using the same process described above: "In the event of cremation, the service may be adapted at the discretion of the minister." The vote was unanimous, and the Committee recommended

³⁶Methodist Church, Journals (1960), 1542.

³⁷Ibid., 1543.

this as an amendment to the Report of the Commission on Worship to the 1964 General Conference of The Methodist Church.³⁸

The other method of revision has been the appointment by the General Conference of a special "Committee on Revision." The General Conference of 1856, 1860, 1904, 1908, 1912, 1928, 1940 and 1960 ordered a revision of the ritual and appointed a special Committee on Revision for the task. This is further discussed in the following subdivision.

INSIGHTS GLEANED FROM GENERAL CONFERENCE JOURNALS

The process of revising the ritual has been intricate and controversial. At times the revision process has been massively complex. To appreciate fully the survey of continuity and change in the previous chapter, it is useful to examine the Journals of the General Conference. The material most relevant to this study is gleaned from those years when there was an active Revision Committee. Undoubtedly through the years this committee has operated at levels of strength and weakness, depending upon the background, experience, knowledge, ability and willingness to serve of those appointed to the committee by the bishops.

Another factor that must be weighed when interpreting the revisions (or lack of them) is the mood and

³⁸Daily Christian Advocate, VII:8 (May 5, 1964), 355.

character of the General Conference.

For example, the General Conference of 1904 ordered appointment of a "Commission for the Revision of the Ritual." The results of that committee were printed for the General Conference of 1908, but never came before the Conference for action. In 1912, another revision was prepared by a special committee. The revision was presented at the Conference, but being only partially considered it was never adopted. The same General Conference ordered the appointment of yet another commission. Its report came before the 1916 Conference. The report was substantially adopted as recommended by the Commission, and the whole report was referred to the Board of Bishops with full and final power. The report was printed, the changes being substantially those proposed in 1912.³⁹

The Committee on Revision appointed in 1912 had on it some prominent men. Richard Cooke, the chairman, was elected to the episcopacy that same year. Professor Harris Franklin Rall from Garrett Seminary was well known. The former president of Drew Theological Seminary was also on the committee. The formation of this Committee was the direct result of the following resolution:

³⁹ Daily Christian Advocate, XVIII (May 10, 1916), 150.

Whereas, Many memorials have been received by recent General Conferences asking for a revision of certain parts of our Ritual; and,

Whereas, The sessions of a General Conference do not afford opportunity for that careful study and deliberate action which such revision would require; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Board of Bishops be requested to appoint a commission of seven to serve without expense, which shall consider the entire matter of the revision of the Ritual, and shall submit a report of their action not later than . . . the next session of the General Conference of 1916; the report to be printed in pamphlet form, showing in parallel columns the Ritual as it now is, and as it would stand when revised.⁴⁰

Mentioned earlier was the fact that a revision had been presented in 1912 but only partially considered and never adopted. The members of the committee who were not in sympathy with the majority submitted a "Report of the Minority of the Committee on Revision."

We take exception to the radical and drastic character of the revision. We consider it unnecessary that the changes should be so numerous. In our opinion the character of Ritual has been very much changed. Time and opportunity do not avail to point out all the unnecessary or unsuitable changes, but we recommend that the existing forms for the baptism of infants, . . . adults and for reception into membership remain as they are.⁴¹

When the Commission returned in 1916 with its report the reasoning behind its recommended changes was carefully spelled out.

In accordance with the action of 1912, under appointment by the Board of Bishops, the following revision has

⁴⁰Methodist Episcopal Church, Journals (1912), 512-513.

⁴¹Daily Christian Advocate, XVII (May 9, 1912), 689.

been prepared and submitted for your consideration.

Among the considerations which have governed us are the following: (1) to make no changes that did not seem clearly required, and to retain as far as possible the language made sacred by long usage, . . . (3) to modify the present burial service, principally through the use of additional Scripture selections, with the purpose of giving fuller expression to the Christian hope and comfort as found in the New Testament, (4) to meet the demand for . . . a form for the burial of children. . . . A number of minor changes have been made to secure consistency of usage and greater clearness and brevity.

It is our earnest hope that these labors may help to conserve the treasures of faith and devotion which have come down to us from the ancient church and from our Methodist fathers, as well as minister to the life of the church in our own day.

In order that the ritual may be available for all those occasions for which it is designed, and thus be of larger service in the church, we recommend that it be printed in its entirety in the hymnal of the church.⁴²

Prior to 1916, the major changes had occurred in 1792 and 1884. The changes made in 1916 created a considerable stir. In 1920 Bishop Thomas Benjamin Neely published a book, The Revised Ritual of 1916, with one hundred and five pages devoted to criticism. He believed that the liturgy prepared by John Wesley should be "protected with the greatest possible care."⁴³ He concluded his first chapter with the following paragraph:

⁴²Methodist Episcopal Church, Journals (1916), 1335.

⁴³Benjamin Thomas Neely, The Revised Ritual of 1916 (Philadelphia: Methodist Episcopal Book Store, 1920), p. 8.

These services were adopted by the Organizing Conference, of 1784, just as it adopted the Articles of Religion, which Wesley had sent over in the same Service Book, and this implies that the ritual was to be a permanent feature in the new Church, like the Articles of Religion.⁴⁴

The bishop claimed that the General Conference did not really know what it was doing and voted blindly.

So this important document was accepted, or adopted, without scrutiny or discussion, and without hearing, or reading, or seeing, or knowing what was in it by a General Conference which is responsible for its acts to the whole Church.

With its eyes closed, and on blind faith, the chief representative body of a great denomination accepted a ritual containing most vital doctrinal teaching, to be used for the instruction of the Church and its congregations, presumably for generations, without knowing what it contained.⁴⁵

He also had some harsh words for his fellow bishops for their attempt to examine critically and revise a ritual containing sixteen services in such a short time. Such delicate work, he claimed, should have demanded months or even years, instead of three hours on each of eight days.⁴⁶

The General Conference of 1928 unanimously voted to order a revision of the ritual. When the Commission reported its work in 1932, it had had five formal meetings and studied many memorials asking for a revision. Rituals of other branches of Methodism and of other Evangelical Churches had been consulted. Of its own admission, the Commission's

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 10.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 99-100.

attempt to secure the guidance of the Church had been only partially successful. Two paragraphs of the Report lift up the behind-the-scenes work of the Commission.

There has been nothing iconoclastic in the attitude of the Commission. Its members have been ever conscious that the Ritual they were revising was that which had been touched by Wesley, Coke and Asbury, which had been loved by their forbears, and by which they themselves had been recognized as they passed through the successive developments of their church life.

While eliminating words and forms which have become unmeaningful to the present generation, the Commissioners have sought to preserve the timeless spirit of the liturgy which Methodists have used from the beginning and which privileges us to share in the worship life of the universal church of Jesus Christ.⁴⁷

The work of the Commission produced significant changes in the structure of the funeral liturgy. Some changes were refined seven years later at the Unification Conference. In a way that Conference and the first General Conference in 1940 marked the end of one era and the beginning of another. A deepening interest in worship and ritual became manifested in the desire of the Rituals and Orders of Worship Committee to broaden the worship resources available to Methodists. Four years later a Book of Worship emerged.

Methodism's first attempt at a "book of worship," however, had been undertaken earlier, though unofficially, by Bishop Thirkield. In 1918 he edited and compiled Service

⁴⁷Methodist Episcopal Church, Journals (1932), 1515.

and Prayers for Church and Home.⁴⁸ It was compact, complete and well-done. After unification of the Methodist Protestant Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in 1939, the first General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1940 adopted the following report of the Committee on Rituals and Orders of Worship:

The Committee recommends that in accordance with the wishes of the Uniting Conference, the General Conference request that the Council of Bishops nominate, for election by this General Conference, a Commission on Orders of Worship, Rituals, and Aids for the Deepening of the Spiritual Life; that this Commission be composed of two Bishops from the Council of Bishops and one minister and one lay member from each of the Jurisdictions of The Methodist Church in the United States and six ministers nominated from the Church at large . . . that the Commission seek to provide Orders of Worship and Rituals for The Methodist Church that will draw upon richer and wider sources than those that have been available up to the present time . . . and that the report of this Commission shall be published in pamphlet form at least six months prior to the 1944 session of the General Conference.⁴⁹

When the delegates went to General Conference in 1944, they received, instead of a "pamphlet," a five hundred forty-nine page book. The Commission had seen its work as having been mandated by the Church, although the wording of

⁴⁸Wilbur Patterson Thirkield (ed. and comp.) Service and Prayers For Church and Home (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1918)

⁴⁹Report of the Commission on Rituals and Orders of Worship to the General Conference of The Methodist Church 1944 (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1944), p. 5.

that mandate (given above) did not specify anything as exhaustive as a book of worship. Nonetheless, a "book" emerged, the first book of worship authorized for publication by The Methodist Church.

In 1948 a Commission on Worship was established to take the place of the Commission on Ritual and Orders of Worship. It was to function until 1952 collecting information on the use of ritual, music and the fine arts in worship and to report its studies and actions to the General Conference.⁵⁰ Liturgically, these seem to have been dormant years with little productivity for the Church.

In 1952 the Commission had its name changed again. Now it was to be called, "Commission on Worship and the Fine Arts," with a similar purpose except that it was asked to "prepare and perfect resources in the field of ritual and orders of worship which may be presented for consideration by the General Conference."⁵¹ The Reverend Dr. Charles S. Hempstead, member of the Commission on Worship from 1952 to 1964, chairman of the sub-committee on Orders for Baptism, Reception of Members and Marriage, and vice-chairman of the Standing Legislative Committee in 1960 has been of great

⁵⁰ Doctrines and Discipline of The Methodist Church (Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1948), par. 2007.

⁵¹ Ibid. (1952), par. 2007.

assistance in shedding light on the Commission's composition and activity. Dr. Hempstead, one of the revisers of the current Book of Worship and chiefly responsible for the Psalter, indicates that in his opinion there had existed prior to 1952 a rather haphazard approach to the work of the committee. However, by 1952, according to Hempstead, some people on the Standing Legislative Committee were beginning to think in earnest about revising the 1944 Book of Worship.⁵²

In 1956, the General Conference authorized the formation of a Commission on Worship to revise again the Book of Worship.⁵³ According to Dr. Hempstead there are no published minutes or committee reports (other than what is found in the various Journals of the General Conference) that shed light on the thinking that lies behind the liturgical changes recommended by the study commission.

In 1960 the Commission presented its report, a two hundred fifty-six page volume entitled, Proposed Revisions for THE BOOK OF WORSHIP for Church and Home, For Trial Use 1960-64. In presenting the Report to the General Conference, the Commission's Chairman, Bishop Edwin E. Voigt, alluded to the attitude about liturgy in the Methodist tradition, which

⁵²Conversation with the Reverend Dr. Charles S. Hempstead, San Bernardino, California, January 21, 1979.

⁵³Methodist Church, Journal (1960), 560.

has always been mixed. A similar statement about the two-fold tradition of Methodism--liturgical and free--had pre-faced the presentation of the Report of the Commission in 1944.⁵⁴

Bishop Voigt made this conciliatory statement in his introductory remarks:

It has been the objective of the Commission on Worship not to make The Methodist Church liturgical or formal, but rather to make its Orders of Worship meaningful and to make them at home in the Church Universal.⁵⁵

Admitting the inadequacy of his Commission for accomplishing its task, Bishop Voigt acknowledges that

It quickly became apparent that we needed help and we turned to the theological seminaries for assistance. They graciously responded and in practically every one of our seminaries untold man hours of research were given to this project. We can never thank the seminaries adequately for the amount of historical materials that were made available to the Commission on Worship.

Out of these data, the Commission has prepared its report.⁵⁶

When Dean William R. Cannon presented the new Order for the Burial of the Dead he indicated that the commission was recommending only two major changes. One change dealt with the content of the Order, two new prayers and a new benediction. The other change dealt with rubrics. After defining rubrics as "brief instructions that come at the beginning of an Order," he said,

⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 553-554.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 553.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 553-554.

I need not read them here, but you notice those rubrics stress the inextricable connection with the Church, especially in the rubric where we give permission for the minister, as he walks before the casket into the church or the grave, to say, "I am the Resurrection and the Life, . . ." ⁵⁷

Four years later when Dr. Warren Bugbee was presenting the Order in its revised form to the General Conference, he again emphasized the importance of the pastoral office and the connection of the service to the Church.

The purpose of these rubrics is two-fold, again to hold up the arm of the pastor as the one through whom arrangements for the funeral should be made, and secondly, to restore these services to the church where they belong.

In the setting of the church surrounded by the symbols of our faith, generally a congregation may join together in singing the Gloria, and following the readings from the Psalms, and also affirm their faith together bringing these comforting words to those who are bereaved. ⁵⁸

He concluded his brief remarks by stating that there were now some alternative and additional prayers, especially for the burial of a child, thus making unnecessary a separate service as in the previous book of worship. The entire report was then adopted with applause. A few minutes later Bishop Voigt received a standing ovation for his gifted chairmanship. ⁵⁹ The Book of Worship, now the home of the Ritual, has not been revised since that time.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 559.

⁵⁸ Daily Christian Advocate, VII (1964), 583.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 589.

The record has revealed the long, winding road by which changes in the Ritual have been made and continuity preserved.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE RITUAL

Though the concern of this project relates to the Methodist tradition, it should be said that the liturgies of other traditions have also undergone "continuity and change." What affects one tradition seems also to affect others. The timing of liturgical change is curious to observe.

This change is noted in a speech given in January 1978 by Massey H. Shepherd in response to a presentation to him by the North American Academy of Liturgy of its annual Berakah Award. In that speech he made reference to the Right Reverend Edward Lambe Parsons, a principal architect of the 1928 Prayer Book revision.

During World War II he wrote an article in which he predicted that after the War there would be such revolutionary changes in society throughout the world that a thorough, overall revision of the Book of Common Prayer would be inevitable. Admittedly, he was addressing Episcopalians, when he reminded them that there had been a major revision of the Book after every significant period of civil or international war since the sixteenth century. What he prophesied for Anglicans has come to pass on an ecumenical and global stage.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., "The Berakah Award: Response," Worship, LII:4 (July 1978), 305.

Applying this statement to the Methodist tradition produces some interesting findings. The Methodist liturgy in America began in 1784 along with the founding of American Methodism just eight years after the Declaration of Independence. The Table shows that 1864 was a year of significant revision. Interestingly, that followed Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and Gettysburg Address in 1863. Major revision also occurred in 1868, following the Civil War, which ended in 1865. More changes came in 1916, two years after the start of World War I. It was the next year that the United States entered the War. The major revisions of 1932 did not follow a war, but they did follow the crash of the stock market in 1929. The first book of worship appeared in 1944, near the end of World War II. At the next General Conference after the Korean War, a revision of the Book of Worship was ordered. The parallels are striking, although these events seem not to have affected the context.

It is also worth noting the influence of the ecumenical movement. It was launched officially at the first World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne in 1927, although some trace its origin to 1910 with the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh. In 1928 the General Conference unanimously voted to revise the Ritual. When the revision was presented to the General Conference of 1932, it was introduced with a statement that contained the following sentence: ". . . the Commissioners have sought to

preserve the timeless spirit of the liturgy which Methodists have used from the beginning and which privileges us to share in the worship life of the universal church of Jesus Christ."⁶¹

The General Conference of 1940, when requesting the commission to provide Orders of Worship and Rituals, asked specifically that they "draw upon richer and wider sources that those that have been available up to the present time"⁶² These words no doubt allude also to the effect of the ecumenical movement.

In 1964 when Bishop Voigt wrote the "General Introduction" to the four hundred thirty-seven page Report of his Commission to the General Conference he wrote as follows concerning the rites and offices of the church, which had been considerably revised:

. . . these changes are the fruit of the painstaking research in the practices of the historic Church and in the experience of Methodism itself. The commission discovered that John Wesley was very conscious of being part of the Church Universal. He was also very conscious that the Methodist movement had something precious to offer to the Church Universal. The commission studied both aspects of this background minutely. In the proposal now made they tried conscientiously to achieve a result which would be true to the Methodist heritage, and at the same time find itself at home in the main-

⁶¹Methodist Episcopal Church, Journals (1932), 1515.

⁶²Report of the Commission on Rituals and Orders of Worship 1944, p. 5.

stream of Christian theology and practice--and not drift off into shallow bayous of worship practice.⁶³

It can be safely assumed that reference to "the Church Universal" at least in part acknowledges the impact of the ecumenical movement.

Massey H. Shepherd observes that the seeds of the liturgical movement were sown in the mid-nineteenth century and that its leaders were romanticists.

Whether consciously or not they were reacting to and rejecting the inexorable growth of rationalistic liberalism, secularism and industrialization whose ultimate issue we are witnessing in our own generation. The aim of these men was to restore the pristine purity of rites which they idealized as belonging to the great "ages of faith."⁶⁴

Shepherd also comments with insight that the first half of the twentieth century was a time when liturgists turned from the past to the present. They had "a concern to apply liturgical principles to the need of both clergy and laity by massive pastoral and educational programs."⁶⁵

In Methodist circles, not too much happened after the publishing of the Book of Worship in 1944. However, just after the mid-point in the century, the members of the Ritual Committee began writing articles for Methodist publi-

⁶³ Report of the Commission on Worship 1964, pp. v-vi.

⁶⁴ Shepherd, "The Berakah Award," p. 302.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 303

cations in an attempt to educate the general Church.⁶⁶

If the first sixty years of the twentieth century can be taken as a single unit, it is clear that there was an extraordinary revival of interest in and appreciation for liturgical worship within Methodism. Massey Shepherd states that this revival occurred in nearly all Protestant churches and that it has taken the form of extensive revisions of official liturgies. He states that much of this renewed interest in liturgical worship, especially in America, has been concentrated generally upon "a more dignified and artistic setting and ceremonial conduct of public worship." Shepherd finds this development juxtaposed with the passing of frontier conditions in American life. He believes that people were experiencing a greater degree of sophistication in their appreciation of American society in general.⁶⁷

Shepherd also sees the modern revival of liturgical worship during the first part of the twentieth century as "a reaction to the excessive individualism that characterized Western society since the close of the Middle Ages, . . .". Since so many people have lost satisfying social relations

⁶⁶Hempstead, "Conversation."

⁶⁷Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., "Liturgy," in A Handbook of Christian Theology (New York: Meridian Books, 1958), pp. 211-212.

and communal values, liturgy, "the work of the people," became an instrument of group participation.⁶⁸

During the first sixty years of this century, the impact of theology cannot be ignored as a liturgical influence. The beginning of World War II launched the period of the ascendancy of neo-orthodoxy.⁶⁹ This movement had appeared ten years earlier in Continental Europe.⁷⁰ There World War I shattered the hopes that Utopia would be ushered in through human effort and belief in human possibility. Americans remained optimistic that the War to end all wars had been fought.⁷¹ Then came the crash of the stock market and the depression in 1929. Since the culture had no message of hope, the Christian faith became reestablished on another foundation--God's revelation in scripture. The Word of God speaking in and through scripture stood over against the human word in culture. This was the Reformation understanding of the centrality and authority of scripture.⁷²

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 213.

⁶⁹ Randolph Crump Miller, The American Spirit in Theology (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), p. 111.

⁷⁰ Walter Marshall Horton, Christian Theology: An Ecumenical Approach (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 31.

⁷¹ William Hordern, A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology (New York: Macmillan, 1957), p. 101

⁷² John B. Cobb, Jr., Varieties of Protestantism (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 223-224.

Such an understanding is in sharp contrast to the liberalism of the nineteenth century. During that time human reason was exalted.⁷³ A look at the funeral liturgy shows that between 1792 and 1868 there was no lesson as such from the Bible. All that remained were a few miscellaneous verses of scripture, half of which came from the Book of Job.

The science of Biblical criticism began to explode during the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. According to Massey Shepherd, modern historical criticism and research gave a change of perspective to the Bible, "out of which has come a larger appreciation and understanding of the liturgical elements in the worship of the Church in New Testament and early Christian ages."⁷⁴

It is true that the expansion of the Methodist funeral liturgy came during the rise of neo-orthodoxy and its emphasis upon Reformation Protestantism that is post-scientific. The Table at the end of the preceding chapter shows how the service grew in the use of Scripture and prayer, particularly since 1932.

Two other influences have already been mentioned. First, the rise of the funeral industry, with the establishment of funeral homes, tended to secularize and dilute the

⁷³James Bryan Wiggins, "Reason," in Charles E. Cole (ed.) Christian Word Book (Nashville: Graded Press, 1968).

⁷⁴Shepherd, "Liturgy," p. 212.

funeral service and promote American individualism.

The other influence which must be noted is that of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. In several instances, the Methodist Episcopal Church clearly followed the lead of the Southern Church. When the Lesson, for example, was re-instated by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1868, the Southern Church had already done so ten years earlier.

It is interesting that Nolan Harmon, himself from the Southern Church, made a motion in 1939 to amend the Report submitted to the Uniting Conference by striking out the passage of scripture taken from II Samuel 12:16-23. That passage had been part of the Southern Church's burial service for a child. The motion prevailed.⁷⁵

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RITUAL IN METHODIST TRADITION

An historical interpretation of the survey of continuity and change is not complete without a clear understanding of the importance of the ritual as a whole in Methodist tradition. Such an understanding requires further exegesis of a dichotomy mentioned earlier, namely, the differentiation between the forms for public worship presented in the Sunday Service, and the other services preserved in The Ritual.

The Sunday Service proper was laid aside and nearly

⁷⁵Methodist Episcopal Church, Journals (1939), 318.

forgotten.⁷⁶ According to the historian, Robert Emory, the last edition of the Sunday Service for use by American Methodists was printed in 1786.

However, the forms for administering the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, along with those for marriage, burial and ordination, became appended to the Discipline.⁷⁷ Thus, The Book of Discipline became the Book of Ritual for Methodist preachers. By looking at the 1868 edition of the Discipline, one can see that the first part of the book is in small print, while the last part, containing the Ritual, is in large print.⁷⁸

While Methodism's regular public worship took on the flavor of the free and extempore type generally followed in the frontier churches, the occasional services in the Ritual remained liturgical and continued to set the pattern and fine widespread usage.⁷⁹

With regard to Sunday morning worship, the preface to the 1944 Report of the Commission on Rituals to the General Conference states that Methodism has never been consid-

⁷⁶ John Bishop, Methodist Worship in Relation to Free Church Worship (London: Epworth Press, 1950), pp. 85-86.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 85.

⁷⁸ Doctrines and Discipline (1868), 145-157.

⁷⁹ Report of the Commission on Rituals and Orders of Worship 1944, p. 6.

ered a liturgical church, but that it always has had fixed forms to guide it in its recurrent acts of public worship.⁸⁰ Regarding the Offices of the Church - that is, The Ritual as preserved in the Discipline, the preface states that Methodism has a twofold tradition of worship. "It is liturgical in conducting its recurrent stated services with reverence according to official adopted forms; it is free in its ability to use extempore prayer, to bend each service to the glorifying of God and to the bringing of his saving grace unto men."⁸¹

So highly respected was the Ritual that the following resolution was adopted at the General Conference of 1916:

Whereas, Under the general term of Ritual there are certain Church offices for the rite of Baptism, Admission to Church Membership, etc.,

Whereas, There appears to be a growing custom to substitute some other form for these sacred offices, or merely to extemporize what may be deemed suitable for the moment;

Resolved, That this General Conference regards the regular use of our several Ritual forms as of obligation upon all our ministry.⁸²

It has already been pointed out that there were differing views across the church on revision of the ritual. Yet, the General Conference was determined to have its ministers use the approved ritual of the Church.

Historically, they were on firm ground. To this

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. v.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 6.

⁸² Methodist Episcopal Church, Journals (1916) 324.

day Article XXII of the Articles of Religion on the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches lifts up the background.

It is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike; for they have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's Word. Whosoever, though his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongeth, which are not repugnant to the Word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.)

Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.⁸³

From 1916 to 1964 the Ritual printed in both the Discipline and Hymnal began with the following two paragraphs:

We call upon all ministers to make faithful use of the forms and orders here provided, without other deviation than is here indicated.

We urge all ministers to encourage and train the people to participate audibly in those portions of the service provided for this purpose, particularly in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The portions to be used as responses are especially indicated by bold-face type.⁸⁴

These two paragraphs applied only to the Ritual and not to the orders of worship. While the ministers were

⁸³The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1976), p. 61.

⁸⁴Doctrines and Discipline (1960), par. 1907.

urged to use one or more of the orders, the wording was less stringent.

Why the Ritual should follow a more conservative vein than regular public worship may involve more complexity than the reasons offered by Bedell and Bishop earlier. Nor is this question answered in the preface to the Report submitted to the General Conference of 1944. That report indicates that the simpler services of Methodist meetings in England, which were held at times that did not conflict with stated services of public worship, came to predominate on the American frontier.⁸⁵ Still, the report does not give any conclusive reason why the Ritual remained liturgical.

A more profound understanding can be gained from the opening paragraph of Geoffrey Rowell's recent work. Rowell emphasizes the special character of certain rites of passage.

All rites and ceremonies concerned with the three significant moments of human life--birth, marriage, and death--are conservative in character. The actions and words with which men surround these momentous occasions become fixed, as expressions of the judgments made about human life and its meaning, and as points by which men may re-orientate themselves in known and familiar ways to new situations. New world-views may lead to new interpretations and to the compiling of new rites and ceremonies, but alongside these new forms the old customs tend to survive, though they are frequently given a new rationale.⁸⁶

⁸⁵Report of the Commission on Rituals and Orders of Worship 1944, p. 6.

⁸⁶Geoffrey Rowell, Liturgy of Christian Burial (London: S.P.C.K., 1977), p. 1.

This statement assists in understanding the deeper meaning of continuity and change in the Methodist funeral service. The liturgical conservatism in such rites which Rowell has observed can be seen in the Methodist rite also. Data in the Table offer examples of how previous liturgical revisions have been in continuity with previous forms. The indication is that future liturgical reform must also take previous forms with similar seriousness.

CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE SPIRIT OF THE FUNERAL SERVICE IN THE METHODIST TRADITION

After carefully looking at the various facets of the funeral ritual in Methodism, it becomes clear that the service is intended to be a carefully structured service of worship. The trend toward greater liturgical form has been pronounced since 1932.

The service has been designed primarily for use in the Church upon the death of one of its members. Adaptation of the service for use elsewhere upon the death of non-members is assumed to be of secondary importance since such usage has never been mentioned in any rubric. The rubrics make clear that this is primarily a funeral service, although nothing would prevent its being adapted for a memorial event.

The structure of the service from the outset has been strongly influenced by the English Book of Common

Prayer and its American counterparts. This accounts for the strongly liturgical shape of the service which persists to the present, as evidenced by the Kyrie. The only place in Methodist liturgy where the Kyrie is to be found is in the Committal service, where it has been retained from the beginning with the exception of the twelve years between 1932 and 1944.

Yet, the service has increasingly provided freedom. The minister has been able to choose among a wider selection of prayers and scripture passages. Provision was made for extemporary prayer following the sermon with this rubric: ". . . the minister may pray as he is moved." This wording suggests that nothing should impede the free and spontaneous operation of the Holy Spirit. Provision was also made for the singing of two hymns or an anthem and an affirmation of faith, all to be selected. The rubrics also provide for the minister and people to read responsively or in unison one or more Psalms.

One must conclude, therefore, that the service has offered considerable freedom within a structured framework. The best summary of this "freedom within a structured framework" is found in the General Introduction to the Report of the Worship Commission in 1964, written by its chairman, Bishop Edwin Edgar Voigt. After addressing the "Fathers and Brethren," Bishop Voigt wrote in his third paragraph about the new Order of Worship. Although Methodism has made

a distinction between it and the Ritual, his comments still have application.

The commission has no intent to press a rigid liturgy on an unwilling church. They do believe that there are certain principles which are an aid to true worship. In the Order of Worship recommended they have tried to suggest a procedure which gives attention to these principles. They hope it will become a framework on which the ministers of the church can fashion an order of worship best adapted to their particular needs.⁸⁷

Nowhere in the service has there ever been provision for mentioning the name of the deceased or saying anything about the person. The assumption has been that the minister would make some reference to the deceased in the Address or Sermon. If that is the case, one might ask to what extent the sermon has been thought of as a eulogy. It is safe to conclude that the Methodist tradition has never been able to state clearly in a rubric how to talk about the deceased at a funeral.

The commentary on the Book of Worship offers little guidance on this subject. It stresses that "it is a denial of our faith if we feel called upon to list the greatness of one departed as if we were giving God some basis for mercy. This is equally true for those whose lives have been outstanding in our eyes or for those whose lives have been far from exemplary."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Report of the Commission on Worship 1964, p. v.

⁸⁸ H. Grady Hardin, "The Funeral," in William F. Dunkle, Jr., and Joseph D. Quillian, Jr. (eds.) Companion to the Book of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 99.

With reluctance the author later admits that

The life of the one whose death has called the congregation together may have characteristics which proclaim important truths. These may be quite fitting in the sermon. A funeral sermon is not a lecture on a person's life or on theology.⁸⁹

Fearful of possible excesses of the past, the Methodist tradition has not articulated a theology for eulogy (other than the above statement) nor a methodology for doing it. What the service has sought to do is to proclaim the Christian faith, giving emphasis to the Holy Scriptures being read and the Word proclaimed that Jesus Christ is the Lord of life and death. It is this proclamation that has concluded the Methodist service from the very beginning in the form of the final collect: "O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall not die eternally"

The Methodist revisers have done very little to update the language of the prayers in the service. Some of these great prayers are in danger of becoming lost unless they can be set forth in a language that will make them available for wider usage.

These conclusions indicate the need for a revision of the service that will preserve continuity with the

⁸⁹Ibid.

present service while incorporating necessary change. A revised service ought to offer more rubrics to ensure adequate guidance for clergy and laity as well as to strengthen the role of the pastor in exercising the ministry of the Church. For example, there is no backing in rubrics for the pastor at the present time to indicate that the rituals of outside organizations do not belong in the service in the Church.

A revised service might provide for greater lay participation in appropriate ways, perhaps in the reading of scripture. The translation of scripture should be one that is readily understood by the mourners. So that God's Word might speak in a way that will bring them help, comfort, assurance, courage and hope, it might be appropriate to include a prayer to that effect prior to reading from the Bible.

Because the funeral is such a mixed gathering of persons, many of whom will never have been together before, consideration should be given to a brief greeting toward the beginning of the service. Of course, this greeting is not so important in towns or churches where those attending the funeral are together at other times.

These and other recommendations will be explained more fully in the commentary which follows the proposed revised service. The new service will retain the major

emphases of the present service as they have been rightly perceived by the chairman of the commission responsible for the latest approved revision:

(1) a declaration of Christian faith, (2) a proclamation of triumph over death, (3) a prayer of the bereaved for strength to live out their lives in the promise that He will not forsake them, and (4) a tender commitment of the body and spirit to him from whence they came and to whom they can be entrusted with complete confidence.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Edwin E. Voigt, Methodist Worship in the Church Universal (Nashville: Graded Press, 1965), p. 145.

Chapter 4

A PROPOSED FUNERAL LITURGY

THE ORDER FOR THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD:

A SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING
AND
AFFIRMATION OF THE RESURRECTION

by

Robert Bryant Davis

"The Service" is printed in black on the right hand (odd numbered) pages of this booklet.

"The Explanation of the Service" and the rubrics (instructions) are printed in red on the left hand (even numbered) pages.¹ In so far as possible each explanation is printed opposite the portion to which it applies.²

Every attempt has been made to avoid sexist language with the exception of quotations from the Bible, which the writer does not feel at liberty to change. In these quotations he, him, his, and himself are to be understood as common gender pronouns which are meant to include male and female, since gender is a category of grammar rather than sex.³ Similarly, man, mankind and brothers are to be understood in the generic sense of established usage.

¹Some rubrics have been adapted from Lutheran Book of Worship (Philadelphia: Lutheran Church in America, 1978), pp. 37-38.

²Format adapted from John Hammond Crum (ed.) The Sacrament of Sacred Sharing in the Lord's Supper (Benson, NC: Benson Newspaper, 1975), p. 1.

³Perry H. Biddle, Abingdon Funeral Manual (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976), p. 8.

EXPLANATORY NOTES AND RUBRICS

- + The death of a member of the Church should be reported promptly to the minister so that he or she might offer the ministry of the Church as soon as possible. The minister will assist in setting the time of the service. All arrangements should be made in consultation with the minister.
- + An honorarium is not accepted for this service when the deceased was a member of the minister's parish.
- + Funeral services for members should be held in the Church. Ceremonies of social or fraternal organizations, if requested, should be held elsewhere and prior to the service in the Church. Such ceremonies are not included in the Church's service in order to avoid distraction from the service of and in the Church.
- + The service is intended primarily for use in church with the body of the deceased present. Modifications of the service enable its use elsewhere. A memorial service is appropriate when the body has been destroyed in an accident or natural catastrophe, or when it has been willed for scientific purposes.
- + The minister may greet the bereaved family and accompany them to their seats prior to the service if not taking part in the procession. In smaller services, the family may wish to greet their friends informally as they arrive.
- + The procession forms in this order: cross or Bible, presiding minister, pallbearers, casket, the bereaved. At the end of the procession the casket is positioned before the altar or the Lord's Table at right angles to it. A white pall, the color appointed for Easter, is appropriate, although purple and black have also been used traditionally. It should be laid ready near the entrance of the church. The casket is closed before the service begins and remains closed thereafter.
- + A brief service for closing the casket may be held at a time before it is brought to the church. With the bereaved gathered around the casket, the pastor may lead in scripture or a Psalm and prayer.
- + Music should be carefully selected so as to reflect the spirit of Christian confidence, trust, and hope in the resurrection. The minister shall be consulted for assistance in making musical selections.
- + The choir, when singing, will normally assemble before the service in their places rather than participating in the procession.

THE SERVICE

VOLUNTARY

PROCESSIONAL SENTENCES

The minister, leading the procession, shall read one or more of the following sentences:

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

John 11:25-26 (Jerusalem Bible)

None of us lives for himself only, none of us dies for himself only; if we live, it is for the Lord that we live, and if we die, it is for the Lord that we die. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Romans 14:7-8 (Today's English Version)

For we know that when the tent that we live in on earth is folded up, there is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 5:1 (Jerusalem Bible)

Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

Isaiah 41:10 (Revised Standard Version)

Blessed be the Lord! for he has heard the voice of my supplications. The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts.

Psalms 28:6-7a (Revised Standard Version)

GREETING

HYMN

- + The minister may wear a stole in the color of Easter to symbolize his or her ordination and the authority granted by the Church to proclaim its faith.
- + When there is no processional the minister may choose to place the Greeting to the relatives and congregation at the very beginning.

The first Prayer of Invocation is a revision by Robert Davis of an invocation which entered the Methodist funeral ritual in 1939. The revision includes a Prayer for Illumination to introduce the reading of lessons from the Scriptures.

The Invocation is largely intended as a naming of the Authority in whose power the minister speaks for Church. The prayer asks for God's presence to be with all the people who have gathered at this time.

The second Prayer of Invocation is a revision by Richard Cain of an invocation which entered the Methodist funeral ritual in 1964. The prayer was offered by Dr. Cain, the Senior Minister of First United Methodist Church of Phoenix until 1977, at a funeral held at La Mesa, California, September 1, 1974. It was transcribed from tape. The original prayer was written by Edwin B. Womack while a United Methodist minister in Arizona.

Psalm 90 was the only Psalm John Wesley included in his Sunday Service, which contained the funeral liturgy, sent from England to the Methodists in North America in 1784. Psalm 90 appeared in the funeral service of the Church of England, in which John Wesley was a Priest, in 1662.

With bold and courageous truthfulness the poet tackles the problem of the brevity of life. Yet, he affirms life fully, approaching it with confidence and affirmation because life is rooted in God. God was God before the earth was created, and will continue to be God from everlasting to everlasting, when the earth has long ceased to exist.

PRAYER OF INVOCATION

Minister:

Our Heavenly Father, you are the Lord of life. From you we came, and unto you we return. You have been our dwelling place in all generations. O God, grant us your blessing in this hour, and enable us so to put our trust in you that our spirits may grow calm and our hearts may be comforted. Now, as we open your Word, help us to receive it with believing hearts. As we hear the promises you are offering to us, may we find ourselves discovering a new sense of hopefulness. O God, give us such trust in you that in holding on to your Word we may be strengthened now and always; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

People: Amen.

(Adapted by Robert B. Davis)

Or the minister may use the following prayer:

O God our Father, creator of all humankind, giver and preserver of all life: We confess to you our slowness to accept death as part of your plan for life, particularly as we remember and rejoice in this life this day. We confess our reluctance to commit each other and particularly those who have known death unto you. Yet, because we love them and because we trust you, indeed unto you we commit them. Enhance our faith and refresh our spirits that we may come to trust you in all circumstances for the care and the providence and the future that you bestow for us--for each and for all. In the Name of him who lived and died and rose again, even Jesus Christ.

People: Amen.

(Edwin B. Womack, adapted by Richard W. Cain)

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

The minister may read from the following Old Testament texts:

Psalms 90 (Jerusalem Bible)

Lord, you have been
our refuge age after age.

Before the mountains were born,
before the earth or the world came to birth,
you were God from all eternity and for ever.

You can turn man back into dust
by saying, "Back to what you were, you sons of men!"
To you, a thousand years are a single day,
a yesterday now over, an hour of the night.

You brush men away like waking dreams,
they are like grass
sprouting and flowering in the morning,
withered and dry before dusk.

The Jerusalem Bible uses the name, Yahweh, for God. After the Exile of 586 B.C., the name of God ceased to be pronounced. The name was too sacred. It was written YHWH.

Psalm 130 has long been associated with the burial service. Luther, though he did not prepare a burial service, had a metrical version of Psalm 130 which he published in a book for use at funerals.⁴ The Psalm offers a profound understanding of the nature of sin and grace. Those in the Methodist tradition have long associated Psalm 130 with John Wesley's Aldersgate experience on May 24, 1738. That afternoon he went to St. Paul's, London, where the text of the anthem sung was from this Psalm, which Wesley quotes in his Journal.⁵

⁴Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., The Psalms in Christian Worship (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1976), pp. 102-103.

⁵John Wesley, Works of John Wesley (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.), I, 103.

We too are burnt up by your anger
and terrified by your fury;
having summoned up our sins
you inspect our secrets by your own light.

Our days dwindle under your wrath,
our lives are over in a breath
--our life lasts for seventy years,
eighty with good health,

But they all add up to anxiety and trouble--
over in a trice, and then we are gone.
Who yet has felt the full force of your fury,
or learnt to fear the violence of your rage?

Teach us to count how few days we have
and so gain wisdom of heart.

Let us wake in the morning filled with your love
and sing and be happy all our days;
make our future as happy as our past was sad,
those years when you were punishing us.

Let your servants see what you can do for them,
let their children see your glory.
May the sweetness of the Lord be on us!
Make all we do succeed.

Psalms 130 (Jerusalem Bible)

From the depths I call to you, Yahweh,
Lord, listen to my cry for help!
Listen compassionately
to my pleading!
If you never overlooked our sins, Yahweh,
Lord, could anyone survive?
But you do forgive us:
and for that we revere you.

I wait for Yahweh, my soul waits for him,
I rely on his promise,
my soul relies on the Lord
more than a watchman on the coming of the dawn.

Let Israel rely on Yahweh
as much as the watchman on the dawn!
For it is with Yahweh that mercy is to be found,
and a generous redemption;
it is he who redeems Israel
from all their sins.

These Psalms can be read responsively in one of two ways:

- (1) The minister can alternate with the congregation verse by verse, OR
- (2) The minister can alternate with the congregation at the asterisk and at the beginning of each verse.

Psalm 139:1-9 (The Proposed Book of Common Prayer)

Lord, you have searched me out and known me;*
 you know my sitting down and my rising up;
 you discern my thoughts from afar.

You trace my journeys and my resting-places*
 and are acquainted with all my ways.

Indeed, there is not a word on my lips,*
 but you, O Lord, know it altogether.

You press upon me behind and before*
 and lay your hand upon me.

Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;*
 it is so high that I cannot attain to it.

Where can I go then from your Spirit?*
 where can I flee from your presence?

If I climb up to heaven, you are there;*
 if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.

If I take the wings of the morning*
 and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,

Even there your hand will lead me*
 and your right hand hold me fast.

Psalm 121 (The Proposed Book of Common Prayer)

I lift up my eyes to the hills;*
 from where is my help to come?

My help comes from the Lord,*
 the maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot be moved*
 and he who watches over you will not fall asleep.

Behold, he who keeps watch over Israel*
 shall neither slumber nor sleep;

The Lord himself watches over you;*
 The Lord is your shade at your right hand,

So that the sun shall not strike you by day,*
 nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;*
 it is he who shall keep you safe.

The Lord shall watch over your going out and your coming in,*
 from this time forth for evermore.

This is the passage quoted by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry. (Luke 4:17-19). Jesus added that this ancient word from the prophet Isaiah had come true and was fulfilled.

Isaiah 43:1-3, 5 (Today's English Version)

"Do not be afraid--I will save you.
 I have called you by name--you are mine.
 When you pass through deep waters, I will be with you;
 your troubles will not overwhelm you.
 When you pass through fire, you will not be burned;
 the hard trials that come will not hurt you.
 For I am the Lord your God,
 the holy God of Israel, who saves you.
 Do not be afraid--I am with you!"

Isaiah 61:1-3 (Today's English Version)

The Sovereign Lord has filled me with his spirit.
 He has chosen me and sent me
 To bring good news to the poor,
 To heal the broken-hearted,
 To announce release to captives
 And freedom to those in prison.
 He has sent me to proclaim
 That the time has come
 When the Lord will save his people
 And defeat their enemies.
 He has sent me to comfort all who mourn,
 To give to those who mourn in Zion
 Joy and gladness instead of grief,
 A song of praise instead of sorrow.
 They will be like trees
 That the Lord himself has planted.
 They will all do what is right,
 And God will be praised for what he has done.

The minister may read from the following New Testament texts:

Romans 8:31-35, 37-39 (Today's English Version)

In view of all this, what can we say? If God is for us, who can be against us? Certainly not God, who did not even keep back his own Son, but offered him for us all! He gave us his Son--will he not also freely give us all things? Who will accuse God's chosen people? God himself declares them not guilty! Who, then will condemn them? Not Christ Jesus, who died, or rather, who was raised to life and is at the right side of God, pleading with him for us! Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble do it, or hardship or persecution or hunger or poverty or danger or death? No, in all these things we have complete victory through him who loved us! For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither

1 Corinthians 15 has always been known as the classic statement about the resurrection of the dead found in most funeral liturgies. It was the Lesson in John Wesley's burial service, which he sent to America.

The new life which is offered is a new creation, that is, a gift which is bestowed "as God will" (Genesis 1:11).⁶

These words from Revelation 21 entered the Methodist funeral liturgy in 1932. They speak with confidence that death, as painful and as hurtful as it is, is not the final answer. The ultimate triumph belongs to God.

⁶Hans Conzelmann, 1 Corinthians, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 281.

angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below--there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord.

I Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-44, 53-58 (Today's English Version)

Someone will ask, "How can the dead be raised to life? What kind of body will they have?" You fool! When you plant a seed in the ground, it does not sprout to life unless it dies. And what you plant is a bare seed, perhaps a grain of wheat or some other grain, not the full-bodied plant that will later grow up. God provides that seed with the body he wishes; he gives each seed its own proper body.

This is how it will be when the dead are raised to life. When the body is buried, it is mortal; when raised, it will be immortal. When buried, it is ugly and weak; when raised, it will be beautiful and strong. When buried, it is a physical body; when raised, it will be a spiritual body. There is, of course, a physical body, so there has to be a spiritual body.

For what is mortal must be changed into what is immortal; what will die must be changed into what cannot die. So when this takes place, and the mortal has been changed into the immortal, then the scripture will come true: "Death is destroyed; victory is complete!"

"Where, Death, is your victory?

Where, Death, is your power to hurt?"

Death gets its power to hurt from sin, and sin gets its power from the Law. But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

So then, my dear brothers, stand firm and steady. Keep busy always in your work for the Lord, since you know that nothing you do in the Lord's service is ever useless.

Revelation 21:1-7 (Today's English Version)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with mankind! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared."

This Psalm entered the Methodist funeral service in 1916. The Psalm describes one enjoying perfect peace of mind, "a peace of mind that flows from an undoubting trust in God" that is almost childlike.⁷

The Gospel comes last among the readings as the climax.

+ We stand for the Gospel because it identifies the authority which makes these words true. That authority is Christ Jesus our Lord.

These familiar words from the Fourth Gospel have been included in Methodist funeral services since 1916.

⁷ Artur Weiser, The Psalms: A Commentary (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 227.

Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!" He also said to me, "Write this, because these words are true and can be trusted." And he said, "It is done! I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end. To anyone who is thirsty I will give the right to drink from the spring of the water of life without paying for it. Whoever wins the victory will receive this from me: I will be his God, and he will be my son."

*Psalm 23 may be read in unison or responsively (No. 560) or it may be sung (No. 68). The people will stand and remain standing for the Gospel.

The Lord is my shepherd:*
I shall not be in want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures*
and leads me beside still waters.

He revives my soul*
and guides me along right pathways for his Name's sake.

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I shall fear no evil;*
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

You spread a table before me in the presence of those
who trouble me;*
you have anointed my head with oil,
and my cup is running over.

Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days
of my life,*
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

(The Proposed Book of Common Prayer)

The minister may read from the Gospel.

John 14:1-7, 25-27 (Revised Standard Version)

"Let not your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know him and have seen him."

The Fourth Gospel emphasizes the life-giving power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit abides and brings comfort when Jesus in the flesh is unable to do so. The disciples are reassured of their continuing relationship with Jesus in their Father's house.

The unforgettable soprano solo and chorus in Handel's, The Messiah, are taken from these words in Matthew 11.

Though reference is made to sacramental practice in the early Church, it must be remembered that the Fourth Gospel writer is emphasizing that "It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life," (John 6:63, Revised Standard Version).

"These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

Matthew 11:25-30 (Jerusalem Bible)

At that time Jesus exclaimed, "I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light."

John 6:35-40, 53-58 (Today's English Version)

"I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "He who comes to me will never be hungry; he who believes in me will never be thirsty. Now, I told you that you have seen me but will not believe. Everyone whom my Father gives me will come to me. I will never turn away anyone who comes to me, because I have come down from heaven to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me. And it is the will of him who sent me that I should not lose any of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them all to life on the last day. For what my Father wants is that all who see the Son and believe in him should have eternal life. And I will raise them to life on the last day."

Jesus said to them, "I am telling you the truth: if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in yourselves. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him to life on the last day. For my flesh is the real food; my blood is the real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I live in him. The living Father sent me, and because of him I live also. In the same way whoever eats me will live because of me. This, then, is the bread that came down from heaven; it is not like the bread that your ancestors ate, but then later died. The one who eats this bread will live forever."

The creeds or affirmations of faith are summaries of what the gospel preaches about God and his saving work in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.

The Apostles' Creed dates back to the second century when it was the affirmation of faith used for candidates for baptism by the church in Rome. Three questions were asked the candidates: "Do you believe in God, the Father Almighty? Do you believe in Jesus Christ, our Saviour? Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, a holy church, and the forgiveness of sins?" If these questions were answered affirmatively, the candidate was baptized in the name of the triune God.

The Apostles' Creed is not the oldest, nor is it apostolic, in the sense that it was compiled word for word by the disciples of Jesus. It is, however, apostolic in the sense that it sums up the message passed down by the apostles.⁸

The text of the Creed used here is taken from An Order of Worship for The Proclamation of the Word of God and The Celebration of the Lord's Supper With Commentary, produced by the Consultation On Church Union in 1968. There it is referred to as "a constant renewal of our 'pledge of allegiance.'"⁹

⁸Wolfhart Pannenberg, The Apostles' Creed In the Light of Today's Questions (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), p. 1.

⁹An Order of Worship for The Proclamation of the Word of God and The Celebration of the Lord's Supper With Commentary (Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 1968), pp. 21, 59.

John 16:20-22 (Today's English Version)

I am telling you the truth: you will cry and weep, but the world will be glad; you will be sad, but your sadness will turn into gladness. When a woman is about to give birth, she is sad because her hour of suffering has come; but when the baby is born, she forgets her suffering, because she is happy that a baby has been born into the world. That is how it is with you: now you are sad, but I will see you again, and your hearts will be filled with gladness, the kind of gladness that no one can take away from you.

*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Minister: Let us profess before God and one another our common faith.

Minister and People:

The Apostles' Creed

I BELIEVE in God, the Father, the Almighty
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate;
he was crucified, died, and was buried.
He went to the dead.
On the third day he rose again,
entered into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life eternal. Amen.

A Modern Affirmation

We believe in God the Father, infinite in wisdom, power and love, whose mercy is over all his works, and whose will is ever directed to his children's good.

+ After the minister or a lay person sketches the life of the deceased, others present will be invited to stand and offer brief expressions of gratitude for the special ways in which life touched life and was touched by God. The title of this part of the service is attributed to William Albert McKoy, who outlined a service for himself.¹⁰

The deceased must be identified and honored. The Christian interpretation of this point of the service is one of thanks to God for the time shared with this person. The moment of remembrance attempts to portray a life into a wholeness that has not been thought of before, since the life was not finished.¹¹

Paul Irion has stated that "The funeral should aid the necessary recollection of the deceased and the beginning of the recapitulation of relationship."¹² Gibbs notes that "as memories are recalled while family and friends are gathered, feelings are expressed and accepted."¹³ Illustrations from the person's life serve as aids to this necessary recall, and they become reminders of the unique meaning of the deceased's life.

What in the past have been known as "eulogies" were already known in biblical days. The most famous is David's eulogy over Saul and Jonathan: "Thy beauty, O Israel, upon thy high places is slain! How are the mighty fallen! . . . I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan; Very pleasant hast thou been unto me, Passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished! [2 Sam. 1:19, 26-27]."¹⁴

"In rabbinic times the delivery of a eulogy was a well-established practice. The eulogy was usually based on scriptural texts and was embellished with parables. . . . But the orators were warned not to exaggerate the merits of the deceased."¹⁵

+ The Sermon will usually be brief. It will articulate the meaning of the Scripture for this particular occasion and proclaim hope and comfort.

+ From the middle of the second century, the Church has celebrated Holy Communion at funerals as a continuing fellowship of prayer and praise between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven. When the sacrament is desired the congregation must be invited to participate; the bread and wine must not be shared among the bereaved family only.

This beautiful prayer was written by James Martineau (1805-1900) and entered the Methodist service in 1932. This revision is by Robert Davis.

¹⁰William A. McKoy, Facing Death From A Christian Perspective (Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1976), p. 25.

We believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of man, the gift of the Father's unfailing grace, the ground of our hope, and the promise of our deliverance from sin and death.

We believe in the Holy Spirit as the divine presence in our lives, whereby we are kept in perpetual remembrance of the truth of Christ, and find strength and help in time of need.

We believe that this faith should manifest itself in the service of love as set forth in the example of our blessed Lord, to the end that the kingdom of God may come upon the earth. Amen.

RECALLING THE GIFT OF LIFE OF N. _____

*HYMN

SERMON

PRAYER

The Minister shall pray either as he or she is moved or using the following prayer, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, to be said by all. When Holy Communion is served, the Lord's Prayer may instead precede the serving.

Eternal God, you have committed to us the swift and solemn trust of life. Since we do not know what any day may have in store, but only that the hour for serving you is always present, may we awaken at every moment to the claim of your holy will; not waiting for tomorrow, but yielding ourselves today Consecrate with your presence the way our feet may go; and the most humble work will leave its mark, and the roughest places be made smooth. Lift us . . . into faith and hope and love by a simple and steady reliance on your will for our lives. . . . In everything draw us to the mind of Christ, so that your lost image may be traced again, and that through him our lives might be brought into attunement with you.

People: Amen.

This benediction is sometimes called the "Peace Benediction." It typically closes the Holy Communion in United Methodist Churches. The blessing comes from the Book of Common Prayer and is an allusion to Philippians 4:7.

+ The procession forms in the same order as before. The pall may be removed from the casket at the church door and left at the church.

+ It is recommended that all at the service in the church be invited to the committal service so as not to exclude a portion of the congregation.

+ The Committal is intended primarily for burial in the ground, but can be adapted for entombment, the interment of ashes, or burial at sea. Normally when there is to be cremation only the Commendation portion will be used. Later the ashes of the deceased are interred using the Committal service.

"In the midst of life, we are in death." These words were taken by Wesley from the Book of Common Prayer of 1662. They are attributed to a monk named Notker, of the abbey of St. Gall in Switzerland, who lived at the end of the ninth century.¹⁶

¹¹Photocopy furnished by Ekkehard Muehlenberg of his letter to James White, dated October 11, 1977.

¹²Irion, The Funeral: Vestige or Value?, p. 227.

¹³Gibbs, Caring for the Grieving, pp. 141-142.

¹⁴Abraham E. Millgram, Jewish Worship (2d ed.; Philadelphia: Jewish Society of America, 1975), p. 331.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 334.

When Holy Communion is celebrated, the service continues with the Invitation, General Confession, Words of Pardon, Sursum Corda, Proper Preface for Commemoration of the Dead, Preface, Consecration, Lord's Prayer, and the Serving.

*HYMN

*BENEDICTION

Minister: THE PEACE of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord:

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

People: Amen.

*RECESSIONAL

THE COMMITTAL SERVICE

When the people have gathered the minister or some Person appointed shall read from the following:

In the midst of life we are in death;
from whom can we seek help?

Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.
(Psalms 124:8, Revised Standard Version)

As kind as a father is to his children, so kind is the Lord to those who honor him. He knows what we are made of; he remembers that we are dust.

(Psalms 103:13, Today's English Version)

Tell everyone who is discouraged, "Be strong and don't be afraid!
God is coming to your rescue, . . ."

(Isaiah 35:4, Today's English Version)

If the Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from death, lives in you, he who raised Christ from death will also give life to your mortal bodies by the presence of his Spirit in you.

(Romans 8:11, Today's English Version)

We want you to be quite certain, brothers, about those who have died, to make sure that you do not grieve about them, like the other people who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and that

This prayer entered the Methodist service in 1939 and was taken from The Book of Common Worship of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. It is revised here by Robert Davis.

This Committal is from the French Reformed liturgy of the City of Bern, now in use. The first quotation is from Genesis 3:19. The second quotation is from 1 Corinthians 15:20. Both mortality and resurrection are mentioned here before the Committal itself.¹⁷

¹⁷ Bruno Buerki, Im Herrn entschlafen. Eine historisch pastoraltheologische Studie Zur Liturgie des Sterbens und des Begrabnisses (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1969), pp. 212-213.

it will be the same for those who have died in Jesus: God will bring them with him.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-14, Jerusalem Bible)

Listen! I will unfold a mystery: we shall not all die, but we shall all be changed This perishable being must be clothed with the imperishable, and what is mortal must be clothed with immortality. God clothes it with the body of his choice.

(1 Corinthians 15:51, 53, 38, New English Bible)

And so I am thankful and glad, and I feel completely secure, because you protect me from the power of death, and the one you love you will not abandon You will show me the path that leads to life; your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever.

(Psalms 16:9-11, Today's English Version)

As a deer longs for a stream of cool water, so I long for you, O God. I thirst for you, the living God. When can I go and worship in your presence? Day and night I cry, and tears are my only food; all the time my enemies ask me, "Where is your God?" My heart breaks when I remember the past, when I went with the crowds to the house of God Why am I so sad? Why am I so troubled? I will put my hope in God, and once again I will praise him, my savior and my God.

(Psalms 42:1-4a, 6-7, Today's English Version)

O Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast love endures for ever!

(Psalms 118:1, Revised Standard Version)

PRAYER FOR FAITH

The minister may offer the following prayer.

God, you have designed this wonderful world, and you know all things in earth and in heaven: Give us such faith in you that by day and by night, at all times and in all places, we may without fear commit ourselves and those dear to us to your never-failing love, in this life and in the life to come. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
People: Amen.

THE COMMITTAL

Minister:

The Lord God said: "Return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

"But Christ has been raised from death, as the guarantee that those who sleep in death will also be raised."

"[Our] Christian name is a 'new name given us at our baptism, to remind us of our new birth.'" It is also used when we are confirmed, married, ordained or buried.¹⁸

The last part of the Committal makes reference to the Apostles' Creed.

Revelation 14:13 has been a part of every revision of the Methodist burial service since the time of John Wesley, and dates before that to the Book of Common Prayer of 1549.

This is the only place where the Kyrie eleison survives in Methodist liturgy. Aside from its liturgical usages, it is widely used in the practice of private prayer.¹⁹

The first of the closing prayers entered the Methodist service in 1939. It has been revised here by Robert Davis.

¹⁸James F. White, New Forms of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon, 1971), p. 160.

¹⁹Per-Olof Sjogren, The Jesus Prayer (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), pp. 11-19. See also Huston Smith, "The Jesus Prayer," Christian Century (March 28, 1973), 363-366; See also Herbert Benson, The Relaxation Response (New York: William Morrow, 1975), pp. 85-87; See also Maxie Dunnam, The Workbook of Living Prayer (Nashville: Upper Room, 1974), p. 105; See also Douglas Rhymes, Through Prayer to Reality (Nashville: Upper Room, 1974), p. 56.

Therefore we commend our brother/sister (neighbor/friend/loved one),
N. (Baptismal name), into the hands of the living God.

We lay his/her body in the grave (crypt/niche/sea), and commit it to the ground (its resting place/the deep), earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, and we wait for the resurrection through our Lord Jesus Christ, who will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Then the minister may say:

I heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Write this: "Happy are the dead who die in the faith of Christ! Henceforth", says the Spirit, "they may rest from their labours; for they take with them the record of their deeds."'

(Revelation 14:13, New English Bible)

VERSICLE, KYRIE AND LORD'S PRAYER

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Minister: Let us pray.
 Lord, have mercy upon us.

People: Christ, have mercy upon us.

Minister: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Minister and People:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYERS

The Minister may offer one or more of the following prayers.

O Lord Jesus, who wept beside the grave of your friend, Lazarus, you are touched with the feeling of our sorrows: Fulfill now your promise that you will not leave your people comfortless but will come to them. Reveal yourself unto these who are filled with sorrow. Enable them to hear you say, "I am the resurrection and the life." Help them, O Lord, to turn to you with true discernment, and to abide in you through faith. As they find comfort in your presence now, may they also have a sure confidence in you for all that is to come; until the day breaks, and the shadows flee away. Hear our prayer, O Lord, and grant us your peace.
 People: Amen.

This first prayer was in the 1662 Prayer Book but did not enter the Methodist service until 1884. It is here revised by Robert Davis.

This prayer used to be known as the Collect and has been in every revision of the burial service and was in the 1662 Prayer Book before that. It is here revised by Robert Davis.

This prayer, which is based upon the Apostles' Creed, is taken from the funeral service of the Presbyterian Church.²⁰

This prayer was prepared and delivered by Dean Elmer G. Homrighausen in Miller Chapel at Princeton during a Memorial Service for the Rev. James J. Reeb, who died March 11, 1965, as a result of wounds received at Selma, Alabama, in the cause of freedom.²¹

This first benediction from 2 Corinthians 13:14 has been known as the "Apostolic Benediction." It was in the 1662 Prayer Book and every Methodist revision since 1784. The second benediction is from Hebrews 13:20-21.

²⁰The Worshipbook (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970), p. 85.

²¹Dean Elmer G. Homrighausen, "Prayer," Princeton Seminary Bulletin, LVIII:3 (June 1965), 57.

Almighty God, with you live all those who have been faithful in the Lord, who after death are in strength and gladness. We give you our heartfelt thanks for the good examples of all those who, having finished their course in faith, now rest from their labor. We ask that we, with them, may have our perfect fulfillment and joy in your eternal and everlasting kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

O merciful God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the resurrection and the life, the one in whom whoever believes shall live, though they die, and whoever lives and believes in him shall not die eternally: We ask you, Father, to raise us from the death of sin into the life of righteousness, that when we shall leave this life we may rest in him, and may receive that blessing which your Son shall pronounce to all who love and revere you, saying, "Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. We ask you to grant this, merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

People: Amen.

Heavenly Father: In your Son Jesus you have given us a true faith and a sure hope. Help us to live trusting in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, and the resurrection to life eternal. Strengthen this faith and hope in us, all the days of our life; through the love of your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior.

People: Amen.

O Thou that healest the broken in heart and bindest up their wounds, look with compassion upon the family whose joy has been turned into mourning. Fill them with the light and comfort of Thy presence. Be Thou their strength in weakness, their support in loneliness, their hope in grief. And awaken in us a new sense of the fellowship of comfort and compassion in which we support one another in all of the painful and crushing experiences of life's pilgrimage. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Then the minister may give one of these blessings:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: Amen.

Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.

People: Amen.

+ The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds its hope and meaning in the resurrection.

The liturgy, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn.²²

+ It is desirable that lay persons participate in the service in appropriate ways, perhaps in the reading of the Lesson from the Old Testament and the Epistle.²³

²²Adapted from The Proposed Book of Common Prayer (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), p. 507.

²³Jon L. Joyce, The Pastor and Grief (Lima, OH: C. S. S., 1973), pp. 49-50.

APPENDIX

SAMPLE GREETING

"We have come together this afternoon so that we could rejoice and console each other; so that we could give thanks for a life that we have known and loved. We have come together in order to say to each other in the presence of the Lord that indeed life is meaningful in all times and in all places and under all circumstances and that for life there is no end, but many a beginning. In this spirit then, my friends, I invite you to be in the presence of God and with each other as we refresh ourselves together in remembering the life of one of God's servants and our friend, Frances. Hear the words familiar and the words new as we refresh ourselves before God:"²⁴

SAMPLE PRAYER

O God, for the ministry of memory we give thanks--for the flashbacks of how much we owe to those who have gone before us. Help us to be convinced that all things work together for good for those who love you. Use this occasion to shore up our faith; utilize an opportunity provided for affirmation of your grace which has been conferred upon us far beyond anything we have earned or deserved. We are grateful for this time of sharing as life touches life and is touched by your grace.²⁵

²⁴Richard W. Cain.

²⁵Bishop James Armstrong at a funeral in San Bernardino, California, November 28, 1978.

We thank you for the privilege that has been ours to share the life of Sidney Edward, and we give you thanks. For all that he has given us to make us what we are; for that of him, especially his goodness and kindness, which lives and grows in each of us and in the Church of Jesus Christ to which he gave his devotion, we give you thanks. All of his pain and suffering are over now, and we give you thanks.

As we have given him back into your loving arms now, we pray your blessing upon all of those to whom he was so very dear, especially upon Gladys and John and his family--the grandchildren and great-grandchildren. We also ask your blessing upon his many friends who have gathered here today.

We pray, Father, that you would draw those of us who remain in this life closer to one another. Make us faithful to serve and comfort one another. Enable us to know that peace and joy which is eternal life.

We thank you for Jesus who knows our griefs, and who died and rose for our sake. As he taught us, so now we pray: "Our Father, . . ."²⁶

²⁶This prayer by Robert Davis contains certain words from "A Service of Death and Resurrection: The Ministry of the Church at Death." (Part of Supplemental Worship Resources 6) (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978), p. 51 (Unpublished working paper).

SAMPLE PREFACE FOR COMMEMORATION OF THE DEAD

Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who rose victorious from the dead, and comforts us with the blessed hope of everlasting life. For to your faithful people, O Lord, life is changed, not ended; and when our mortal body lies in death, there is prepared for us a dwelling place eternal in the heavens.²⁷

²⁷The Proposed Book of Common Prayer, p. 382.

Chapter 5

REVISION--THE NEED FOR FURTHER STUDY

The attempt to revise a portion of any liturgy is fraught with dangers. Anyone engaged in such a task should have no illusions about the problems.

Further study on the language of liturgy will always be called for. Developing an adequate language in worship creates inevitable conflicts of values. As Don E. Saliers of Candler School of Theology expresses it:

On the one hand, there is need for solemnity, beauty and emotional range. On the other, there is the need for real contact with the worshipers' sense of reality. Achieving a linguistic idiom for "faithful and full participation" is not easy. Inherited English styles of prayer . . . appear to have lost the capacity to "reach" and to "speak" to people's everyday lives.¹

Saliers' excellent article discusses the need for detailed study of the impact of "conversational prayer" on the people's hearing of liturgical language.

Conversational prayer brings a new vivacity and directness to many persons' faith experience. For this we can be grateful. Yet it also shifts expectations concerning what is prayed as well as how it sounds. When conversational prayer begins to be perceived as more "honest" or "authentic" than the formal language of the liturgy, dissonance is created. Dull liturgical language and ritual action generates needs for increasing colloquial-

¹Don E. Saliers, "Language in the Liturgy: Where Angels Fear to Tread," Worship, LII:6 (November 1978), 485.

ism in prayer or for increasing access to the ecstatic ranges of personal prayer.²

Further inquiry and study needs to consider the ministry of the community of faith as well as that of the pastor. Wayne Oates rightly observes how the funeral "sets the smaller grieving family into the larger context of the extended family of the church, . . ."³ Are there liturgical actions in addition to those considered here which can enable the community of faith to be a channel of grace?⁴

A major area requiring further study is the need for confession. The need for confession and forgiveness at nearly every funeral service must never be underestimated. Paul Tournier's words speak to this need.

It may seem brutal to say so, but there is no grave beside which a flood of guilt feelings does not assail the mind. All that one reproaches oneself for having done and all that one reproaches oneself for having failed to do on behalf of the departed. . . . It is clear that there is no true and complete answer but the forgiveness of God.⁵

What shape an acceptable form for this might take remains to be seen. The writer considers the Presbyterian

²Ibid., p. 487.

³Wayne E. Oates, Pastoral Care and Counseling in Grief and Separation (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 70.

⁴Perry H. Biddle, Jr., "Death, The Funeral Process And The Minister," Christian Ministry, IX:2 (March 1978), 32.

⁵Paul Tournier, Guilt and Grace (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), p. 93.

attempt a missing of the mark.

Guilt feelings at funerals lie close to the surface of the mourners. A corporate expression is needed that provides for the announcement of God's healing grace in Jesus Christ. The most sensitive expression is that of the General Confession in the Book of Common Prayer, which first appeared there in 1552. For this writer the sermon has been the best vehicle for dealing with this subject. In the sermon the words of the General Confession can be spoken in a way that allows the mourners to identify with the prayer:

Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. . . . We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us. . . .

Or, an illustration of confession and pardon can become part of the sermon. But, the pastor will never minister effectively to the deepest and most real needs of the bereaved unless he/she takes seriously the words of Tournier stating that guilt is present. The pastor's task is to see that the guilt is acknowledged and that grace abounds. Every situation will be different. The pastor is expected to have intimate familiarity with the resources of the faith, for they are the pastor's "tool kit," the heritage of the Church offered to the pastor who is conducting the funeral service. These resources are not lifeless forms, but instruments for healing broken hearts.

Opportunity for confession and pardon is also provided in the serving of the Lord's Supper. The sacrament affords the chance to emphasize the realities of forgiveness and oneness with Christ, as well as with his Church, both on earth and in heaven--"the communion of saints." Yet, the observance of the sacrament within the funeral framework raises issues which call for further reflection.

Richard Bruehl correctly reminds us that when Holy Communion is served in the usual worship setting, it is not uncommon to see grief being quietly expressed at the chancel rail. He suggests that the commemorative aspect of Communion, which symbolically brings the past into the present, is particularly important for many persons. Also, he believes that it is important to give expression to this emotional dimension of the human self.⁶

Those planning worship services, Bruehl believes, should affirm and take into consideration these inevitable reactions to loss and changes. In so doing, the planners should not fall into the trap of "totally 'subjective' worship."⁷

James White admits that within Methodism, for both historical and theological reasons, the Eucharist ought to

⁶Richard G. Bruehl, "Mourning, Family Dynamics and Pastoral Care" in J. Donald Bane and others (eds.) Death and Ministry (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), p. 100.

⁷Ibid.

be the basic Sunday service. Experience teaches, however, that Methodists will not generally concede that. On communion Sundays, therefore, attendance usually drops.⁸ Richard Bruehl believes that the reason why attendance drops so dramatically in many Protestant churches is because of the personal dimension of experience connected with communion, which symbolically brings the past with its attendant grief into the present.⁹

If Bruehl's conclusion is substantially correct, there are obvious implications for the serving of communion, particularly at the funeral. These implications might well receive further consideration.

More work must be done, for no revision is ever "final." The words of James White so aptly apply to this project. Here "we are simply adding the latest chapter to a long history of innovations."¹⁰ Further revision is always necessary, but it must be historically informed. Such careful revision will avoid the pitfalls voiced by Massey Shepherd when he noted that liturgy can become

⁸James F. White, "Outside the Liturgical Establishment Or Who Needs Us?," Worship, LII:4 (July 1978), 297.

⁹Bruehl, "Mourning, Family Dynamics and Pastoral Care," p. 100.

¹⁰James F. White, New Forms of Worship (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971), p. 57.

"frozen in revised rites or open to the fads of practitioners 'doing their own thing.'"¹¹

¹¹Massey H. Shepherd, Jr., "The Berakah Award: Response," Worship, LII:4 (July 1978), 301.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Published Materials

- Becker, Russell J. "Funeral--Memorial or Burial?" Pastoral Psychology, XV:143 (April 1964), 53.
- Bedell, Kenneth B. Worship in the Methodist Tradition. Nashville: Tidings, 1976.
- Benson, Dennis C. Celebrate! The Funeral. Nashville: Abingdon Audio-Graphics, 1973. (Cassette and Guide)
- Benson, Herbert. The Relaxation Response. New York: William Morrow, 1975.
- Bible. Good News Bible. New York: American Bible Society, 1976. Publisher cites this as The Bible in Today's English Version.
- _____. The Holy Bible, Revised Standard Version. New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1953.
- _____. The Jerusalem Bible, general ed., Alexander Jones. Garden City: Doubleday, 1966.
- _____. The New English Bible. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- Biddle, Perry H., Jr. Abingdon Funeral Manual. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976.
- _____. "Death, The Funeral Process And The Minister," Christian Ministry, IX:2 (March 1978)
- Bishop, John. Methodist Worship in Relation to Free Church Worship. London: Epworth Press, 1950.
- The Book of Common Prayer. New York: Seabury Press, 1928.
- The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church. Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1964-1976.
- The Book of Worship for Church and Home. Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1964, 1965.
- Bruehl, Richard G. "Mourning, Family Dynamics and Pastoral Care" in J. Donald Bane and others (eds.) Death and Ministry. New York: Seabury Press, 1975.

- Buerke, Bruno. Im Herrn entschlafen. Eine historisch pastoraltheologische Studie Zur Liturgie des Sterbens und des Begrabnisses. Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1969.
- Cobb, John B., Jr. Varieties of Protestantism. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960.
- Cooke, R. J. History of the Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1900.
- Conzelmann, Hans. I Corinthians, tr. by James W. Leitch (Hermeneia) Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
- Crum, John Hammond (ed.) The Sacrament of Sacred Sharing in The Lord's Supper, 3d rev. ed. Benson, NC: Benson Newspaper, 1975.
- Daily Christian Advocate (Methodist Church) I-VII (1940-1964).
- Daily Christian Advocate (Methodist Episcopal Church) I-XXIV (1848-1939).
- Doctrines and Discipline of The Methodist Church. Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1940-1960.
- The Doctrines and Discipline of The Methodist Episcopal Church. New York: Waugh and Mason, and others, 1796-1939.
- Dunnam, Maxie. The Workbook of Living Prayer. Nashville: Upper Room, 1974.
- Emory, John. A Defence of "Our Fathers," and of the Original Organization of The Methodist Episcopal Church against The Rev. Alexander M'Caine and Others (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1827).
- Facsimile of the original manuscript of The Book of Common Prayer, signed by Convocation December 20th, 1661, and attached to the Act of Uniformity, 1662 (London: Eyre & Scottiswoode, 1891).
- Gibbs, C. Earl. Caring for the Grieving. Corte Madera, CA: Omega Books, 1976.
- Glidden, Thomas. "The American Funeral," Pastoral Psychology, XIV:135 (June 1963), 10.

- Grisbrooke, W. Jardine. "Towards a Liturgy of Committal," in Gilbert Cope (ed.) Dying, Death and Disposal. London: S.P.C.K., 1970.
- Hardin, H. Grady. "The Funeral," in William F. Dunkle, Jr., and Joseph D. Quillian, Jr. (eds.) Companion to the Book of Worship. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970.
- _____, Joseph D. Quillian, Jr., and James F. White. The Celebration of the Gospel. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1964.
- Harmon, Nolan B., Jr. (ed.) The Pastor's Ideal Funeral Manual, 2d ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1942.
- _____. The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism. Nashville: Lamar & Barton, 1926.
- Hedley, George. Christian Worship. New York: Macmillan, 1953.
- Homrighausen, Elmer G. "Prayer," Princeton Seminary Bulletin, LVIII:3 (June 1965), 57.
- Hordern, William. A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology. New York: Macmillan, 1957.
- Horton, Walter Marshall. Christian Theology: An Ecumenical Approach. Rev. & enl. ed. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958.
- Irion, Paul E. The Funeral: Vestige or Value? Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1966.
- Jackson, Edgar N. The Christian Funeral. New York: Channel Press, 1966.
- Joyce, Jon L. The Pastor and Grief. Lima, OH: C.S.S., 1973.
- Livingstone, Elizabeth A. (ed.) The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.
- Lutheran Book of Worship, Ministers Desk Ed. Philadelphia: Lutheran Church in America, 1978.
- Martineau, James. Home Prayers with Two Services for Public Worship, 2d ed. London: Longmans, Green, 1892.

- McKoy, William A. Facing Death From A Christian Perspective. Nashville: Discipleship Resources, 1976.
- Methodist Church. Journals of the General Conferences. Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1940-1960.
- Methodist Episcopal Church. Journals of the General Conferences. New York: Carlton & Phillips, and others, 1796-1939.
- The Methodist Hymnal. New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1905.
- The Methodist Hymnal. New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1935.
- The Methodist Hymnal. Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1939.
- Miller, Randolph Crump. The American Spirit in Theology. Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974.
- Millgram, Abraham E. Jewish Worship. Philadelphia: Jewish Society of America, 1975.
- Neely, Thomas Benjamin. The Revised Ritual of 1916. Philadelphia: Methodist Episcopal Book Store, 1920.
- Oates, Wayne E. Pastoral Care and Counseling in Grief and Separation. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976.
- The Order for the Burial of the Dead (Prayer Book Studies XIII). New York: Church Pension Fund, 1959.
- An Order of Worship for The Proclamation of the Word of God and The Celebration of the Lord's Supper With Commentary. Cincinnati: Forward Movement, 1968.
- Pannenberg, Wolfhart. The Apostles' Creed In the Light of Today's Questions. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975.
- The Proposed Book of Common Prayer. New York: Seabury Press, 1977.
- Proposed Revisions for The Book of Worship for Church and Home. Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1960.

Randolph, David James (ed.) Ventures in Worship. 3 vols.
Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1970-1973.

Report of the Commission on Rituals and Orders of Worship
to the General Conference of The Methodist Church 1944.
Nashville: Methodist Publishing House, 1944.

Report of The Commission on Worship to the General Confer-
ence of The Methodist Church 1964. Nashville: Methodist
Publishing House, 1964.

Rhymes, Douglas. Through Prayer to Reality. Nashville:
Upper Room, 1974.

The Ritual of the Methodist Episcopal Church. New York:
Methodist Book Concern, 1916.

Rodenmayer, Robert N. The Pastor's Prayerbook. New York:
Oxford University Press, 1960.

Rowell, Geoffrey. The Liturgy of Christian Burial. London:
S.P.C.K., 1977.

Saliers, Don E. "Language in the Liturgy: Where Angels Fear
to Tread," Worship, LII:6 (November 1978), 482-488.

Shepherd, Massey H., Jr. "Liturgy," in A Handbook of
Christian Theology. New York: Meridian Books, 1958.

_____. The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1950.

_____. The Psalms in Christian Worship. Minneapolis:
Augsburg, 1976.

_____. "The Berakah Award: Response," Worship, LII:4
(July 1978), 299-313.

Sjogren, Per-Olof. The Jesus Prayer. Philadelphia:
Fortress Press, 1975.

Smith, Huston. "The Jesus Prayer," Christian Century
XC:13 (March 28, 1973), pp. 363-366.

Thirkield, Wilbur Patterson (ed. and comp.) Service and
Prayers For Church and Home. New York: Methodist
Book Concern, 1918.

- Tournier, Paul. Guilt and Grace. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962.
- Voigt, Edwin E. Methodist Worship in the Church Universal. Nashville: Graded Press, 1965.
- Watson, Richard. The Life Of Rev. John Wesley, A.M. 1st American Official Ed. with tr. and notes by John Emory. Cincinnati: Swormstedt & Poe, 1855.
- Weiser, Artur. The Psalms: A Commentary, tr. by Herbert Hartwell, 5th rev. ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962.
- Wesley, John. The Works of John Wesley, ed. by Thomas Jackson. 14 vols. London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n.d.
- White, James F. New Forms of Worship. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1971.
- _____. "Outside the Liturgical Establishment Or Who Needs Us?" Worship, LII:4 (July 1978), 291-299.
- Wiggins, James Bryan. "Reason" in Charles E. Cole (ed.) Christian Word Book. Nashville: Graded Press, 1968.
- The Worshipbook. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1970.

Unpublished Materials

- Armstrong, Bishop James, prayer offered at a funeral in San Bernardino, CA, November 28, 1978.
- Cain, Richard W., prayer offered at a funeral in La Mesa, CA, September 1, 1974 (transcribed from tape). Permission to quote secured.
- Hempstead, Charles S., conversation in San Bernardino, CA, January 2], 1979.
- Mühlenberg, Ekkehard, letter to James White, dated October 11, 1977.
- "A Service of Death and Resurrection: The Ministry of the Church at Death." (part of Supplemental Worship Resources 6) Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1978. (unpublished working paper)